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Poe, Odoyevsky, and Purloined Letters: Questions of Theory and Period Style Analysis

by

Slobodan Sucur

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

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E. D. Blodgett

M. V. Dimic

N. Rahimieh

P. Robberecht

P. Rolland

for V. Nemoianu

18 Sept 2000

Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to account for the similarities between Edgar Allan Poe's and V. F. Odoyevsky's oeuvres by reading some of their work in relation to a few of E. T. A. Hoffmann's "High Romantic" tales and in relation to the Biedermeier period (1815-1848). This period is described in the study as late Romantic and sometimes as post-Romantic. In other words, the Biedermeier can be read as both a closing phase of Romanticism and as a beginning of the Realist period of the nineteenth century. The Biedermeier is a transitional period whose instability is in many ways reduplicated in recent Poe scholarship, beginning with Lacan's and Derrida's responses to Poe's "The Purloined Letter" (1844). Therefore, this study first analyzes Lacan's and Derrida's readings of Poe before going on to read Poe and Odoyevsky in relation to the Biedermeier. The theoretical ambiguities of recent Poe scholarship, which one encounters in the Lacan-Derrida debate, are in a sense the contemporary half of the textual ambiguities which one stumbles across in the Poe and Odoyevsky canons. And when read in relation to the Biedermeier, Poe's and Odoyevsky's work becomes the bridge to understanding both the nature of current Poe scholarship and the nature of the Biedermeier as a literary-historical period. It is one of those unique situations where both theory (Lacan's and Derrida's complex responses to Poe) and praxis (Poe's and Odoyevsky's oeuvres as tentative parts of the Biedermeier) antagonize questions of literary classification and interpretation but also imply that classification and interpretation are necessary.

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Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to account for the similarities between Edgar Allan Poe's and V. F. Odoyevsky's oeuvres by reading some of their work in relation to a few of E. T. A. Hoffmann's "High Romantic" tales and in relation to the Biedermeier period (1815-1848). This period is described in the study as late Romantic and sometimes as post-Romantic. In other words, the Biedermeier can be read as both a closing phase of Romanticism and as a beginning of the Realist period of the nineteenth century. The Biedermeier is a transitional period whose instability is in many ways reduplicated in recent Poe scholarship, beginning with Lacan's and Derrida's responses to Poe's "The Purloined Letter" (1844). Therefore, this study first analyzes Lacan's and Derrida's readings of Poe before going on to read Poe and Odoyevsky in relation to the Biedermeier. The theoretical ambiguities of recent Poe scholarship, which one encounters in the Lacan-Derrida debate, are in a sense the contemporary half of the textual ambiguities which one stumbles across in the Poe and Odoyevsky canons. And when read in relation to the Biedermeier, Poe's and Odoyevsky's work becomes the bridge to understanding both the nature of current Poe scholarship and the nature of the Biedermeier as a literary-historical period. It is one of those unique situations where both theory (Lacan's and Derrida's complex responses to Poe) and praxis (Poe's and Odoyevsky's oeuvres as tentative parts of the Biedermeier) antagonize questions of literary classification and interpretation but also imply that classification and interpretation are necessary. David Perkins, in his *Is Literary History Possible?*, seems well aware of this point, and he indicates that while he remains unconvinced that literary history can be properly written, he still realizes that it is a necessary endeavor (17).

At some level, my reinterpretation of Lacan's and Derrida's contributions to Poe scholarship, so as to do a broader period style analysis of the Biedermeier and of Poe and Odoyevsky as parts of it, is a Gadamerian endeavor. It will lead to a conception of period style analysis that is diachronic rather than synchronic, not a "a dialectic of refining opposed theses [as for Hegel]" but "a dialectic between one's own horizon and that of 'tradition'…[as for Gadamer]" (Palmer 166). In

turn, such a diachronic conception of period style analysis, in order to account more fully for the Poe and Odoyevsky oeuvres, will result in a situation in which "there is no direct opposition between the aesthetic and the historical attitudes,...Rather, the aesthetic is a moment of the hermeneutic awareness,...complemented by the hermeneutic-historical task of achieving an understanding that is also a self-understanding" (Hoy 107). Such lack of opposition between the aesthetic and historical realms already, in part, accounts for the eclectic nature of Poe's and Odoyevsky's work, and more generally, for the Biedermeier as an eclectic milieu in which such writing is situated. And a diachronic, Gadamerian conception of period style analysis, while tending toward subjectivity, too obviously for some, toward "an understanding that is also a self-understanding," is not really subjective in the traditional sense of the term, as something purely relativistic, opposed to positivism and objectivity. It is important to remember that for Gadamer, and more significantly, for the purposes of this study, art is "much more than a merely subjective phenomenon. It allows for the mediation of a historical tradition and a cultural setting. What an age considers art reveals a great deal about the age" (107). Ultimately, even the idea of traditional and "cultural" setting is not as significant for a diachronic conception of period style analysis as the fact that setting exists, and that when analysis occurs, it is taking place in a comparative fashion between that which is situated and that which does the situating. I am not intending that this study turns "methodological" considerations into demands for "definite method" so as to become an "argument for universal history," but I am intending, rather hermeneutically, that it interprets "historiography as a questioning process" (122), and that it allows for the possibility of certain literature as engaging in this same questioning process, literature in which the divisions between history (from the Greek *histor*, learned) and histrion (from the Latin *histrio*, actor) appear to be blurred.

Before I bring in period style analysis as a counterbalance to and accommodation for contemporary, theoretical contributions to the Poe canon (Lacan and Derrida), I must first engage that theory directly to see how it operates in relation to Poe's work. Because of the structure of this study, its swing from theory to larger, more literary-historical surveys, it is only natural that the theme gets larger as the study progresses. Eventually, E. T. A. Hoffmann is mentioned, and Prince

V. F. Odoyevsky, and a comparative study is undertaken between these two authors and between Edgar Allan Poe, and then, even further beyond that point, once I have situated Poe and Odoyevsky within a Biedermeier milieu, the idea of the Rococo appears, together with one of my favorite questions, inspired by a paper I once wrote on the eighteenth-century Grand Tour, a question about the possible multiplicity of neoclassicisms. All of these later questions and ideas serve to broaden the period style analysis, and to bring about a hopefully concrete and rather specific definition of the Biedermeier period, as represented by such figures as Poe and Odoyevsky, and in relation to other relevant periods through which, we might say, the Biedermeier attempted to define itself: the Rococo, Neoclassicism(s), and high Romanticism. This all occurs later.

Initially, as I have mentioned, the study looks at the response of Jacques Lacan to Poe's "The Purloined Letter," and then, at Derrida's response to Lacan. The most interesting aspect of these open-ended responses, at least for me, is found in the first paper by Lacan, which is an example of structuralist as opposed to Freudian psychoanalysis. Not only did this first article inspire the later response, but the fact that Lacan felt compelled to use this particular tale by Poe for analysis, "The Purloined Letter," says something important about that work. This gesture may be saying that "The Purloined Letter" is naturally suited for Lacanian psychoanalysis, that its primordial theme and ideas give it that advantage, an advantage that is, however indirectly, linked all the way back to Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and to other early literature which ventures into the psychological realm. This is one of the main things which Lacan's interest in responding to the tale may be saying; there may be several other things operating here as well, which help to explain the relationship, and the main point of the very first chapter of this study is to look at that relationship between Lacan's article and Poe's short story, a relationship which marks the beginning of contemporary Poe scholarship and criticism. But even beyond that, Poe's "The Purloined Letter" has a significance which is more obvious than its natural susceptibility to Lacanian psychoanalysis. The tale is often thought of as the most artistically refined example of a genre which Poe, it is sometimes said, may have invented, the ratiocinative short story, which also includes "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," and the parodic "Thou Art the Man."

Because this genre, which Poe may not necessarily have invented but certainly helped to perfect, inspired responses from people such as Lacan and Derrida, via "The Purloined Letter," I feel that it is appropriate to touch upon the possible origins of the detective genre, prior to and including Edgar Allan Poe, and also to give an overview of possible sources which Poe may have used when developing his own trilogy of detective tales, and the fourth tale, "Thou Art the Man," which can be read as a parody of a genre that Poe had just helped to popularize.

T. J. Binyon, in his work, *'Murder Will Out': The Detective in Fiction*, cites Dorothy L. Sayers, who in her essay, "Aristotle on Detective Fiction" (printed in her book, *Unpopular Opinions*, 1946), speaks of how "the whole of Aristotle's *Poetics* was written with the detective story in mind," and that "the detective story 'possesses an Aristotelian perfection of beginning, middle, and end'" (2). While not taking the origins of the detective genre that far back, Binyon mentions that the chapter from Voltaire's *Zadig* (1747) entitled "Le Chien et le Cheval" is often cited as the modern beginning of the genre, a chapter "in which the eponymous hero deduces the appearance of the Queen of Babylon's dog and the King of Babylon's horse from the traces they have left behind them," but he points out that the example is not completely successful, because Voltaire "is not interested in the anecdote as an example of the science of deduction, but rather as one more demonstration of the miserable plight of the rational being in a society composed primarily of unreasoning ones" (2). Apart from this, Binyon says that Voltaire's story is not completely original, but is adapted "from an episode in the Chevalier de Mailly's *Les Voyages et les aventures des trois princes de Serendip*, published in Paris in 1719. Here the three princes, like Zadig, demonstrate their powers of deduction by describing a camel, its load, and its rider without having seen any of them" (2). But then again, "Mailly's book was not original either; it was an unacknowledged translation of Christoforo Armeno's *Peregrinaggio di tre giovani figliuoli del Re di Serendippo* (Venice, 1557), which itself claimed to be a translation of a Persian original. In fact, it appears to be the fusion into a single narrative of a number of Persian stories and motifs, while the anecdote demonstrating the powers of observation and deduction of a young man or young men is to be found not only in Persian, but also in Arabic, Turkish, Indian, and Hebrew folk-tales" (2). Even Alexandre Dumas seems to have

employed such a story "in a chapter of *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne* (1848); there, d'Artagnan, by observing the traces left behind by an affray in a wood, is able to tell Louis XIV what has happened..." (3).

Other possible sources for the detective genre which Binyon cites include "Defoe, author of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719),...not so much because he displays an interest in deduction, but because his works so often take crime and the criminal as their subject: either real, as in *The History of the Remarkable Life of John Sheppard* (1724) and *The Life of Jonathan Wild* (1725), or fictional, as in the novels *Moll Flanders* (1722) and *Roxana* (1724)" (3). Binyon also mentions that William Godwin's *The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794) is "often cited as the first true crime novel," but he is skeptical of this because Godwin, much like Voltaire, is not interested so much "in crime and detection" as in outlining the corruption of society (3). I would mention E. T. A. Hoffmann's "Mademoiselle de Scudéri" (1819) here; after all, both Scudéri and Desgrais are involved in detective work. Binyon mentions that Dickens' Inspector Bucket in *Bleak House* (1852-3) "is often referred to as the first police detective in English fiction," but he believes that Wilkie Collins' Sergeant Cuff in *The Moonstone* (1868) is more significant, and he cites T. S. Eliot, who wrote in his "Wilkie Collins and Dickens" (1927) that *The Moonstone* is "the first and greatest of English detective novels" (3-4). Binyon suspects that Emile Gaboriau's novel, *Monsieur Lecoq* (1869), which outlines "Lecoq's first case," is even more important than Collins' novel from a year before, in part because Gaboriau has in Lecoq introduced the "professional counterpart" to Edgar Allan Poe's Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin, and has implicitly perfected the detective genre (4-6). Binyon tends to dismiss Poe's Dupin as more of a transitional figure, because "with his predilection for a nocturnal existence, who chooses for his residence 'a time-eaten and grotesque mansion,'" and so on, he is still a largely Romantic figure, "recognizably kin to the narrators of other stories such as 'Ligeia' (1838) or 'The Fall of the House of Usher' (1839). And the ratiocinative urge displayed by Dupin in his investigation of crime is earlier to be found, for example, in the essay 'Maelzel's Chess-Player' (1836), in which the author endeavors to discover, through a succession of logical inferences, the secret of a famous chess-playing automaton" (4-5).

Stephen Knight, in his work, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, adds to Binyon's survey of the possible origins of the detective genre by mentioning two other works which are left out in the previous study. He speaks of how "the first large collection of crime stories [was] called *The Newgate Calendar* [and] appeared in 1773. The title had been used before, but then a shrewd publisher saw a market for a reasonably expensive and well-produced set of volumes which brought together accounts of the crimes and punishments of major criminals" (9). The collection became quite popular and was expanded and reprinted several times: "Knapp and Baldwin's edition of 1809 was a particularly well-known and successful one, and versions kept appearing until the late nineteenth century..." (9). Knight later mentions how "the 'autobiography' of Eugène François Vidocq presents the first professional detective in literature, and so has considerable historical importance," but he admits that much like *Caleb Williams*, this work "has a curiously ambiguous effect" (28). He gives a summary of Vidocq that I quote here:

> Vidocq was a criminal who turned police informer with such success that in 1811 he became a full-time inquiry agent in the newly formed Sûreté, the plain-clothes detective arm of the recently founded national police. When he retired in 1827 he arranged for the publication of his memoirs; two volumes appeared in 1828, another two in 1829. After a lengthy account of how he worked his way through the prison system into the police force, the *Memoirs* tell a series of fairly brief encounters with criminals. Typically, Vidocq is given a particularly difficult case, to catch and bring proof against some hardened criminal and, usually, his accomplices. He gains information or infiltrates the gang with disguise, patience and cunning as his major methods. (28-9)

By the time Poe wrote his trilogy of detective tales, there was already a line of earlier works which he might have drawn upon for ideas. Thomas Ollive Mabbott, speaking about "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), says that it "is a great literary monument" and that "Poe's source for his detective is the philosophic protagonist of Voltaire's *Zadig*..." (*Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe* 2:521). Mabbott further mentions that another possible source for this first detective tale by Poe could have been a short article entitled "New Mode of Thieving," from the *Annual Register for 1834*, which speaks of a "robber monkey" (2:522). Another possible source could have been a poem entitled "The Monkey," by David Humphreys (1752-1818), one of the Hartford Wits, who tells the "story of a pet monkey, who, imitating his master shaving himself, cut his own throat" (2:523). Another source could have been "an incident in Sir Walter Scott's *Count Robert of*

Paris (1831), chapter XXV, where the villainous philosopher Agelastes is strangled by Sylvan, an orangutan (who makes strange hoarse unintelligible sounds), who he had once hit with a staff" (2:523). Mabbott speculates that the name of the detective, particularly "C. Auguste," was probably "taken from that of Monsieur C. Auguste Dubouchet, a friend [of Poe's] who was seeking a position as a teacher of French" (2:524). It is equally possible that Poe had in mind "André-Marie-Jean-Jacques Dupin (1783-1865), a French politician described as a person of antithetical qualities, a living encyclopedia, and a lover of legal methods, in *Sketches of Living Characters of France*, translated by R. M. Walsh (1841), a book reviewed by Poe in the issue of *Graham's* in which his story appeared" (2:525). Mabbott speaks of how "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" (1842), Poe's second detective tale, is of "historical importance, since it is the first detective story in which an attempt was made to solve a real crime," the murder of Mary Cecilia Rogers, a New York cigar girl, who disappeared on July 25, 1841, "after telling her fiancé she was going to visit an aunt..." (3:716). "Three days later, her body was found floating in the Hudson River and was pulled ashore south of Weehawken at a resort area known as the Elysian Fields in Hoboken, New Jersey....but the news of the death was first taken seriously by the New York *Sunday Mercury* of August 1, 1841" (3:716-7). As for "The Purloined Letter" (1844), Mabbott agrees that it is perhaps "the best of all Poe's stories. Its great merit lies in the fascination of the purely intellectual plot, and in the absence of the sensational" (3:972). However, he says that no "exact source" for Poe's plot has ever been pointed out, apart from some of Poe's own earlier works: "Poe remarked on *not* seeking truth in a well in his prefatory 'Letter to Mr. ——' in *Poems* (1831); in a review of Alexander Slidell's *An American in England* in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, February 1836; and in 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue...'" (3:972). Mabbott also adds that even though some ideas are from books that Poe read and some characters are based on real people, "it goes without saying that the real Queen of France, Marie Amélie, was not portrayed [in 'The Purloined Letter']" (3:973). Mabbott speaks of how "Thou Art the Man" (1844) "is generally recognized as the first comic detective story, and it is 'a trail blazing tour de force' in its first use of the least-likely-person theme, of the 'scattering of false clues by the real criminal,' and of 'the psychological third degree'" (3:1042). He says that

"Poe's sources have received some attention from students. His use of what is now called ballistics is early, but not the first in fact or fiction. In an American story by William Leggett, 'The Rifle' [which first appeared in *The Atlantic Souvenir for 1828*], an innocent man is cleared of a charge of murder by a demonstration that the fatal bullet did not fit his gun. In 1835 Henry Goddard, a Bow Street runner in London, traced an irregularly shaped bullet found in a man's body to a correspondingly misshapen mold owned by his assassin" (3:1042-3). Ventriloquism is also used in Poe's story, but it had already been used earlier in Charles Brockden Brown's novel, *Wieland* (1798) (3:1043).

LeRoy Lad Panek, in his *Probable Cause: Crime Fiction in America*, complements Mabbott's own comments by also looking for ways in which Poe may have been influenced to create his detective tale trilogy. Panek speaks of how Poe may have modeled the character of Dupin on a certain Stephen Girard, who is described as follows:

> Girard at his death was worth almost $7,000,000 and was one of the wealthiest men in America. Even without legal friends, Poe must have known about Girard's will, along with its provision for a Philadelphia police force, because it was the subject of public and protracted litigation by his relatives, to whom he bequeathed a mere $140,000. Poe may have even known something of Girard the man, a native Frenchman devoted to French rationalism (his finest ships were the *Montesquieu*, *Rousseau* and *Voltaire*), whose wife became mentally ill and died in a Pennsylvania Hospital, and who, in spite of his conspicuous exertions for the public good, led, according to the *Dictionary of American Biography*, a "lonely and self-centered life." (13)

Panek also suspects that Poe may have had in mind a certain George Lippard, when creating Dupin. Lippard was an eccentric court reporter who "wrote a fiction column called 'City Police' for the story paper *The Spirit of the Times*, the offices of which were across the street from *Graham's* offices. Lippard also editorialized in the same paper about the misappropriation of Girard's legacy,..." (12-3).

It is entirely possible that Poe drew upon a variety of sources when crafting his trilogy of detective tales, and the one parody of the genre, but a plentiful amount of sources does not completely explain why it is Poe who is usually credited with developing detective fiction in its modern form. Mabbott implies the importance of these three tales by describing the first example as "a great literary monument," and Nadya Aisenberg, in her work, *A Common Spring: Crime Novel and Classic*, echoes this comment by calling Poe's first ratiocinative tale "influential" (5). More signifi-

cantly, Aisenberg cites a passage which the Goncourt brothers entered into their *Journal* on July 16, 1856: "...he [Poe] ushers in the scientific and analytic literature...in which things play a more important part than people; love gives way to deduction; and the basis of the novel is transferred from the heart to the head" (6). It is this point which explains more clearly why Poe's ratiocinative tales, particularly "The Purloined Letter," are key texts in the rise of modern detective fiction, and also why such tales have inspired figures like Lacan and Derrida to respond to them. I do not think that the shift is completely from the heart to the mind, as the Goncourts say, but rather, there seems to be a balance or duplicity occurring. George N. Dove, in his work, *The Reader and the Detective Story*, implicitly touches upon this balancing act that may be there by looking at detective fiction, and Poe's role in its development, differently: he speaks of how "detective fiction is structurally, though not thematically, a conservative genre; its conservatism is that of the organized game, preserving custom and convention as essential to its own continuation. Detective fiction adapts easily to thematic, but not to structural, invention....unlike any other genre, the detection formula is based upon a single literary prototype: in a sense, every detective story is a retelling of Poe's [ratiocinative tales]" (5-9).

In *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, Stephen Knight, a critic previously mentioned, seems also to catch onto the balancing which is occurring in Poe's ratiocinative tales, particularly "The Purloined Letter." He speaks of how "Poe combines the twin nineteenth-century legends of the scientist and the artist. Dupin sorts and resolves the puzzles of data in the manner of Cuvier himself. One of the great excitements for the intelligentsia of the period was the growing sense that a sufficiently patient inquirer could explain the structure of puzzling phenomena....Poe's masterly illusion is to make Dupin move from and through the scientific to the special authority of the visionary" (42-3). It is interesting that Knight should speak of Poe as creating an "illusion" whereby Dupin appears to transcend the scientific and enter the visionary, or more specifically, the imaginary and intuitive realm; Knight does not go so far as to say that Dupin is a combination of Classical and Romantic tendencies, but he seems to imply this at moments. I would go so far as to say that such fusion and duplicity, where Dupin uses both reason and imagination to solve puz-

zles, is a specifically Biedermeier quality, and such things will be said as this study progresses beyond theory and into period style analysis, but for now, it is enough to see that Poe's ratiocinative tales are "literary monuments" for more reasons than even Mabbott suspected when uttering such a comment. It is not so much the case that these tales are literary monuments as they are literary encyclopedias, which record and accomodate for a variety of tendencies, some of which may even be contradictory; Dupin is a case in point. Dorothy L. Sayers, in her article, "The Omnibus of Crime," summarizes the historical and literary significance of Poe's detective tales rather nicely, and I quote the section in its entirety:

> ...Poe stands at the parting of the ways for detective fiction. From him go the two great lines of development—the Romantic and the Classic, or, to use terms less abraded by ill-usage, the purely Sensational and the purely Intellectual. In the former, thrill is piled on thrill and mystification on mystification; the reader is led on from bewilderment to bewilderment, till everything is explained in a lump in the last chapter. This school is strong in dramatic incident and atmosphere; its weakness is a tendency to confusion and a dropping of links—its explanations do not always explain; it is never dull, but it is sometimes nonsense. In the other—the purely Intellectual type—the action mostly takes place in the first chapter or so; the detective then follows up quietly from clue to clue till the problem is solved, the reader accompanying the great man in his search and being allowed to try his own teeth on the material provided. The strength of this school is its analytical ingenuity; its weakness is its liability to dullness and pomposity, its mouthing over the infinitely little, and its lack of movement and emotion. (62)

Janice MacDonald, in her article, "Parody and Detective Fiction," also speaks of how Poe "unites the two opposing forces of rationalism and imagination," and she mentions, rather importantly, that "Poe developed a theory of artistic synthesis between the two states" (65). But MacDonald further argues that by developing this synthesis, Poe accomplished two things: first, "he imposed standards of quality onto tales of gothic and sensational horror," so that one could no longer "indulge in horrific sequences for sensation's sake alone," and second, he "developed the prototype for all detective fiction that was to follow" (65). MacDonald further adds that "parody" may have been "instrumental...in the birth of detective fiction [for Poe]," and she cites Robert Daniel who in his "Poe's Detective God" implies the importance of parody by arguing that "the detective stories appear to be extensions of Poe's criticism. As a reviewer, he is very much the sleuthhound; he ferrets out plagiarism, and hunts down writers guilty of bad taste, confused thinking, or the murder of the language. Contrariwise, the detective stories may be regarded as essays in criticism" (64-5).

Jon Thompson, in his *Fiction, Crime, and Empire: Clues to Modernity and Postmodernism,* speaks generally of how the inception of the detective genre was tied to the emerging idea of modernity/modernism, but more specifically, he focuses in the second chapter on Poe and argues that Foucault's "notion of the panopticon" offers many possibilities for understanding Poe's ratiocinative tales (44). He argues "that in the person of Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin, Poe creates a figure whose omniscience is comparable to that of a panopticon....The chief significance of Foucault's notion of the disciplinary society for Poe's detective fiction, then, is that it articulates a desire for a complete form of knowledge, a desire that ultimately becomes a structural element of the genre" (44). Going further, Thompson touches upon the tension between rationalism and imagination that the previously mentioned critics have also seen in Poe's detective tales, but he expands the observation by interpreting that for "Poe, rationalism [exemplified by Dupin] and empiricism [exemplified by the police] represent ways of understanding the world that are linked to different social formations—rationalism to the superior capabilities and values of the aristocracy, empiricism to the creation of a democratic, industrializing society built on philistine values" (45). The argument becomes even more interesting when Thompson writes as follows: "...I refer to Poe's stories as fantasies of power and knowledge: In them, reasoning is exalted so much that it loses any claim to verisimilitude. In them, knowledge confers power upon the subject. What is valorized in Poe's detective stories, then, is not rationalism per se, but a romanticized version or ideology of rationalism in which reason, or more properly 'analysis,' figures as the highest mode of apprehension" (47). Thompson has made a division between "rationalism per se" and a "romanticized version or ideology of rationalism," and this division sets the stage for what I will be engaging in for the next few chapters, an analysis of psychoanalytic and deconstructionist responses to Poe's "The Purloined Letter," responses which themselves attempt to make the same distinction that Thompson has made by responding to and criticizing each other for using an ideology of rationalism rather than a functional form of rationalism. But this is not completely true either, because in that space between functional rationalism and its idealized, Romantic counterpart, there is what I can best describe as a mêlée of rationalisms. This will hopefully become apparent

when I attempt defining the Biedermeier in relation to a multiplicity of classicisms.

Thompson appears to touch upon such complexities and tensions that are present in Poe's ratiocinative tales, and he later tries to account for these complexities by arguing that Dupin's omniscience, his aloofness, is grounded in the fact that Poe's idea of the superman is different than Nietzsche's: "...for Poe disorder is not systematic but individual, aberrational. The chief role of Dupin's ratiocinative genius is to rectify what in the larger scheme of things are temporary aberrations from the norm. Nowhere is it suggested that crime may have a social cause or a class character; for Poe it is an abstract puzzle, an intriguing deviation from an otherwise smoothly running social mechanism" (49). What is interesting about Dupin's attitude is that if crime does not have a social cause, and allows for smoothly running mechanisms once it is eradicated, this may be Poe's way of saying that social chaos is manufactured, rather than random. Furthermore, once that manufactured chaos is taken away, one would assume, judging from the dénouement of the ratiocinative tales, that society naturally goes back into a state of classical simplicity, or rather, becomes once again a "pastoral tradition," as Thompson himself says at one point (52). This takes on a larger meaning if we juxtapose such a view to the postmodern view that chaos is random and inevitable, rather than manufactured, but it is also interesting in the light of what Thompson speaks of in the first chapter of his study, implying that at least since Flaubert and Baudelaire, we have been living one long Modernism that has many subtleties and variations within it, one of which, most recently, is Postmodernism, a sub-category of Modernism (29). Speaking of such tales as "The Fall of the House of Usher," Thompson says that here "reason cannot confer order on life," as it does in Dupin's case (51). Such tales, as opposed to the Dupin trilogy, may therefore be read as emphasizing the randomness of chaos, or at least juggling with that idea, and Poe takes this issue up once again, on a more cosmic level, in such tales as "The Masque of the Red Death," and particularly in the philosophical prose-poem, *Eureka*. The ratiocinative tales, on the other hand, and more grim examples, like "The Cask of Amontillado," appear to entertain the opposite idea, that chaos is manufactured, and is more of an individualistic aberration, that is in turn solved by individuals, and transforms back into a classical idyll. With this in mind, I am not surprised why

Sayers would say that "Aristotle's *Poetics* was written with the detective story in mind" (qtd. in Binyon 2). The tension between rationalism and imagination, that we find in Poe's ratiocinative trilogy, as many critics have pointed out, is certainly there, but I doubt that Poe was struggling to decide whether chaos is manufactured or random. It seems that the idea of manufactured chaos is more prevalent, and the real struggle which is occurring is between those who want to eradicate it and those who do not. This struggle is enacted between Lacan and Derrida, but it is also enacted, on a broader level, between various forms and types of classicism and pseudo-classicism, a larger struggle that goes beyond defining Poe's work, and defines the idea of a Biedermeier period.

I - Lacanian Poe

Lacan's "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'" (first published in *Écrits* in 1966 and first translated in 1972 to appear in *Yale French Studies*), can be read as the beginning of contemporary Poe scholarship and criticism. The year 1972 is most significant, when the translation made Lacan's "Seminar" more accessible than before, particularly to scholars working on Poe in a strictly Anglo-American milieu. However, before directly engaging Lacan's response to Poe's "The Purloined Letter," particularly his emphasis on the two major scenes in the tale when the letter is exchanged, it is worthwhile to point out possible similarities in character type and character location between Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* and Poe's short story. It may appear odd to start this discussion by jumping as far back as Greek antiquity, but if we assume that Lacanian psychoanalysis is a variation on Freudian ideas, and perhaps Jungian archetypes, then a parallel discussion of Sophocles' most famous work and Poe's most famous ratiocinative tale may help us to understand the way in which Lacan was drawn, as a psychoanalyst, to respond to the latter tale. The point of this brief and rather primordial comparison between the mentioned works is not somehow to deconstruct and elaborate on the Oedipal myth, but to expose a vague line which runs from Sophocles to Poe, a line which points to a fairly consistent narrative form that may be called ratiocinative, but that is basically concerned with riddles and enigmas.

There is no question that the story of Oedipus is quite old: "Homeric poetry had touched on the story; it had been told in the lost epics of the *Thebaid* and *Oedipodea*; Aeschylus had devoted to it the second play of a trilogy on the House of Laius; it appealed strongly to Euripides, who wrote an *Oedipus* and dramatized related themes in his *Antigone* and *Phoenician Women*" (Bowra 162). It may be that the very antiquity of the story lends itself to literary reformulation in new and subtle ways, and Poe seems to have been one of these reformulators. It may be possible that the narrative form which the story of Oedipus takes has been more influential on writers like Poe than the theme itself: "...its chief interest is the particular form which it takes. It shows the fortunes of an individual man in an intensely dramatic form. And in doing this it naturally raises questions

about the justice of the gods, who treat Oedipus simply as a means to enforce a lesson on others. It is not like this that we expect the gods to act....When the gods humiliate Oedipus they create a situation of great complexity in which much is concerned beside the general main lesson" (176). The similarity between Poe's "The Purloined Letter" and Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* is perhaps more obvious once we refer back to that peculiar tension which critics seem to find in Poe's ratiocinative tales, a tension between imagination and rationalism, intuition and empiricism, and so on. As I implied in the introduction to this study, this tension brings an added dimension into Poe's detective fiction, because it allows for contradictory tendencies to exist side by side, and in that way, it gives the work a certain comprehensiveness. This comprehensiveness is to an extent present in Sophocles' play, but is perhaps used for different purposes. Lewis Campbell, in his *Tragic Drama in Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Shakespeare: An Essay,* touches upon this point:

> In Sophocles the form and spirit of tragedy have coalesced into a perfect whole. When one of his dramas is compared with one of Aeschylus or with the remaining trilogy the most apparent difference is an increase of concentration; and this characteristic attains its highest development in the first 'Oedipus.' The antecedent circumstances, which in the 'Antigone' and the 'Ajax' are somewhat fully set forth at the opening, are here reserved for the pause of awe-stricken suspense which precedes the crisis, and the sequel, which in those two dramas is in a manner separated from the principal action—the last exit of Antigone and the death of Ajax making a perceptible break—in the 'Oedipus Tyrannus' follows almost continuously, while the protagonist still holds the scene. (157-8)

S. M. Adams, in *Sophocles the Playwright*, also makes a point that echoes Campbell's comment:

> ...the Sophoclean tragic figure is not reduced to the pattern of contemporary men and women. He is drawn to a scale that places him midway between the powerful but half-symbolic characters of Aeschylus and the "psychological" analyses of Euripides: he is not a symbol, nor is he "modernized"; he is a "giant figure from the epic past." The effect justifies the practice. The necessary strength of will is given to the character in the early scenes. It is then developed and intensified, being assailed in vain, as the drama unfolds, by pleas and objections, until either the blow of fate descends or the crisis is resolved. In this process a tragic figure may reach a kind of desperate but splendid isolation, apparently deserted by both men and gods.... (20)

In his article, "Sophocles," R. G. A. Buxton also touches upon this middle ground which Sophocles' work seems to occupy, and what is interesting about Buxton's discussion is that he traces such an attitude toward Sophocles back to classical times. In the first or early-second century A.D., there was a certain Dio Chrysostom who "in his comparison of the three tragedians' versions of the Philoctetes story says of Sophocles that 'he seems to stand midway between the

two others, since he has neither the ruggedness and simplicity of Aeschylus nor the precision and shrewdness and urbanity of Euripides, yet he produces a poetry that is august and majestic…'" (8). About a century earlier, "the critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus also found a 'middle' quality in Sophocles' style: between the 'austere' (Pindar, Aeschylus, Thucydides, etc.) and the 'smooth' (Sappho, Euripides, Isocrates, etc.) he located the intermediate, 'well-blended'…mode of composition, including Sophocles as well as Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, and others. Of this intermediate style Dionysius says he is at a loss to decide 'whether it is produced by excluding the extremes or by blending them'…" (8). This last point which Dionysius makes is rather interesting, because we are faced with the same problem when reading Poe's ratiocinative tales, particularly "The Purloined Letter." We find it difficult to see whether the tension which exists in such a tale is there because Poe excludes extreme forms of rationality and imagination, arriving at a middle ground, or because he blends the two extremes, and thus arrives at a middle ground. The other, perhaps more obvious similarity between Poe's tale and Sophocles' play has been hinted at already by Campbell, who spoke of an "increase in concentration" and cohesion of action as being one of the characteristics of Sophoclean drama; Poe was quite fond of the phrase "unity of effect," and this echoes Campbell's own comments on Sophocles' work. And Buxton in his own article also emphasizes this same point, by citing J. Gould, who "notes Sophocles' tendency to 'run over' formal distinctions—in contrast to Euripides, who tends to emphasize the separateness of *rhesis*, prologue, etc.—the result being that we are 'enticed into seeing dramatic action as unfolding process and development, one phase growing from another, and personality is correspondingly experienced as in some degree continuous and developing'" (14).

Irony should also be briefly mentioned because it is certainly present in Sophocles' play and Poe is fond of it as well. Buxton says that irony "has traditionally, and rightly, been regarded as one of Sophocles' hallmarks….*Oed. Tyr.* teems with unnerving moments of irony, perhaps the most crushing of all being…[when] the shepherd says that he saved baby Oedipus out of pity. Until the revelation of the truth Oedipus' ignorance is cast into ironical relief by the blind but insightful Teiresias;…" (17-8). Adams elaborates on the topic by saying that the "Greek word

'irony'...does not lend itself without a wrench to all 'ironical' effects in literary works. It is defined by Aristotle as...'pretence towards the lesser': that is, the 'ironical' person, unlike the 'boaster,' consciously understates or underacts fact. In this sense it is used, for instance, by Demosthenes, and in the familiar expression 'Socratic irony.' Its use in literature is more comprehensive, and the very looseness of that use may cause confusion....In Sophocles we have, of course, what is called irony of situation" (21). In Poe's case, irony may not necessarily be strictly Socratic, needless to say. Poe was interested in German theories of Romantic Irony via Friedrich Schlegel and especially his brother, August Wilhelm Schlegel. G. R. Thompson, in his *Poe's Fiction: Romantic Irony in the Gothic Tales*, speaks of how there is evidence that Poe read A. W. Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, which was first translated into English in 1815, and that from "A. W. Schlegel alone,...Poe could have gotten a sense of Friedrich Schlegel's more extreme concepts of 'higher' irony, 'self-parody,' and 'transcendental buffoonery,' tempered by August Wilhelm's wistful melancholy and more practical turn of mind" (26-30). Such irony is not necessarily situational, since it is oftentimes subtler, and may more precisely be described as an irony of pose and circumstance, that can easily evaporate into a type of proto-existentialist, cosmic irony. But such divisions in definition do not hinder the main point of this discussion. In Poe's "The Purloined Letter," the main irony arises when Dupin intuits that the letter is hidden in the open and we then juxtapose this possibility against our subsequent realization, that the Prefect and the police are guaranteed not to find it because they assume that it is literally "hidden."

Apart from these rather general similarities in form and effect that we may see between Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* and Poe's "The Purloined Letter," there also seems to have been a transplanting, or rather, "grafting" of character types. The reason I refer to them as "types" is because I tend to read Sophoclean characters and those of Poe as two-dimensional, representing ideas, questions, and so on. Certainly, I am not saying that every character type found in Sophocles' work can be found in Poe's tale, but there appear to be overlaps. If I am to set up a grafting sequence, it would include the following pairs: (a) Chorus - Narrator (b) Creon - Monsieur G—, Prefect of the Parisian police (c) Jocasta - Queen (d) Oedipus - King (e) Oedipus/Tiresias/Corin-

thian messenger - Dupin (f) Oedipus/Laius - Minister D—. There are already peculiarities here, and some require more explanation than others. The Chorus in *Oedipus Tyrannus* serves to advance the play, to offer observations, and so on: "…taking of thought is no spear for the driving away of the plague. / There are no growing children in this famous land; / there are no women bearing the pangs of childbirth" (*The Complete Greek Tragedies: Sophocles* 2:18). The narrator of Poe's tale has a similar role, to fill the plot and advance it, as when he questions the Prefect of Police regarding the search they initiated at the Minister D—'s residence: "You explored the floors beneath the carpets?," "And the paper on the walls?," and "You looked into the cellars" (*Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe* 3:981)? The second pair, I think, is equally plausible. Creon investigated the mystery of Laius' murder but never came to a solution, and remained silent about it, as we see in his talk with Oedipus: "What trouble was so great to hinder you / inquiring out the murder of your king? / 'The riddling Sphinx induced us to neglect / mysterious crimes and rather seek solution / of troubles at our feet'" (2:16). The Prefect of Police has a similar attitude, when questioned by the narrator: "Well, but G—, what of the purloined letter? I presume you have at last made up your mind that there is no such thing as overreaching the Minister? 'Confound him, say I—yes; I made the re-examination, however, as Dupin suggested—but it was all labor lost, as I knew it would be'" (3:982). Jocasta has been paired with the Queen in Poe's tale, the "personage of most exalted station," for a more important reason than just being a Queen: the Queen saw that the Minister D— was stealing her letter, "but, of course, dared not call attention to the act, in the presence of the third personage who stood at her elbow [the King]" (3:976-7). Such partial covering up of the truth (the presence of the letter) is rather similar to Jocasta's attempt to downplay Oedipus' suspicions when he questions the Corinthian messenger about a shepherd: "Why ask of whom he spoke? Don't give it heed; / nor try to keep in mind what has been said. / It will be wasted labour" (2:56). Oedipus has been equated with the King in Poe's tale, the "third personage," for the simple reason that the latter is metaphorically blind, unaware of the letter (and the contents) that the Queen is trying to hide from him; this is similar to Oedipus' position in Sophocles' play, even though he is more inquisitive than the King in Poe's tale (who is ironically the

more successful of the two).

The last two character grafts are peculiar, as I said. I paired Oedipus with the Minister D—— because of the simple fact that Oedipus falls from his station in life, so to speak, and a similar fate awaits the Minister D——, as Dupin outlines: "…being unaware that the letter is not in his possession, he will proceed with his exactions as if it was. Thus will he inevitably commit himself, at once, to his political destruction. His downfall, too, will not be more precipitate than awkward" (3:993). I have paired Laius with the Minister D—— for reasons that will shortly become obvious. The greatest peculiarity is with Dupin himself, as represented by my character graft, where he takes on characteristics of Oedipus, Tiresias, and the Corinthian messenger. Dupin is in a certain sense like Oedipus, even more so than the Minister D——, simply because he feels the need to solve riddles and enigmas, but he is simultaneously not a full reflection of Oedipus, because it is not Dupin who falls from his station in life in this story, but this is a matter of perspective, because in Poe's first ratiocinative tale, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," the narrator describes Dupin as follows: "This young gentleman was of an excellent—indeed of an illustrious family, but, by a variety of untoward events, had been reduced to such poverty that the energy of his character succumbed beneath it, and he ceased to bestir himself in the world, or to care for the retrieval of his fortunes" (2:531). Noble birth is of course reminiscent of Oedipus, who "was of royal blood," even though "his birth could hardly be considered fortunate" and even if "the consideration of his position as…'good birth,' was simply inconceivable to Sophocles and his contemporaries" (Elftmann 297). And apart from this, Dupin is not really attempting to solve the mystery of the purloined letter for its own sake. He speaks of how he is acting "as a partisan of the lady concerned [the Queen]" and says the following near the dénouement: "D——, at Vienna once, did me an evil turn, which I told him, quite good-humoredly, that I should remember" (3:993). In this way, Dupin, if equated with Oedipus, becomes a new form of that character, one who enacts revenge against his fate, through control.

But Dupin also echoes the blind prophet Tiresias, who, while blind, sees further than Oedipus and is confronted for it: "Do you imagine you can always talk / like this, and live to

laugh at it hereafter? / 'Yes, if the truth has anything of strength'" (2:26). Dupin echoes Tiresias' literal blindness when the Prefect of Police arrives and confronts him with a problem: "'If it is any point requiring reflection,' observed Dupin, as he forebore to enkindle the wick, 'we shall examine it to better purpose in the dark'" (3:975). Dupin continues with this theme of darkness/literal blindness as offering insight when he puts on dark glasses before visiting the Minister D—: "Full of these ideas, I prepared myself with a pair of green spectacles, and called one fine morning, quite by accident, at the Ministerial hotel....I complained of my weak eyes, and lamented the necessity of the spectacles, under the cover of which I cautiously and thoroughly surveyed the apartment, while seemingly intent only upon the conversation of my host" (3:990). The reason why I have also paired the Corinthian messenger with Dupin is because both bring the letter back to their owners, so to speak. The Corinthian messenger, thinking that he is doing Oedipus a favor by telling him of his adoption, spills the message: "'Do you know / that all your fears are empty?' / How is that, / if they are father and mother and I their son? / 'Because Polybus was no kin to you in blood'" (2:54). Dupin, of course, after listening to the Prefect of Police's complaints that the letter was not found even after the second search, tells him the story of Abernethy and the miser, and of how after the miser attempted to sponge a medical opinion from Abernethy, asking him what the "imaginary individual" should take, Abernethy told the miser that this person should "take *advice*, to be sure," whereupon the Prefect says that he is "*perfectly* willing to take advice, and to pay for it," and he then receives this response from Dupin, that brings back the letter and message (both literally and metaphorically): "'In that case,' replied Dupin, opening a drawer, and producing a check-book, 'you may as well fill me up a check for the amount mentioned. When you have signed it, I will hand you the letter'" (3:982-3). In this way, it is not difficult to see Dupin as representing certain aspects of all three character types, Oedipus (the fallen king), Tiresias (the "blind" prophet), and the Corinthian messenger (this is self-explanatory). Dupin is Oedipus only to an extent and only inversely so, because in this case he acts for the Queen's benefit, and does so to avenge the evil turn the Minister D— did on him back in Vienna, whereby D— can through this evil turn be seen as partly reflecting Laius, as Oedipus describes him in their only meeting at the

crossroads: "...and as I passed he struck me from his carriage, / full on the head with his two pointed goad" (2:46). Dupin is more obviously reflective of Tiresias, but not simplistically and as an end in itself because of two important reasons: literal blindness is not necessarily a prerequisite for insight here since it is parodied with the dark spectacles that only hide sight, and more significantly, the reward for being Tiresias is that you become the messenger from Corinth.

Important similarities between character types in Sophocles' play and Poe's "The Purloined Letter" may in part explain why Lacan, by looking at the two scenes in the latter work, when the letter is exchanged, was compelled to describe them as having a triadic structure. Such a structure also seems to operate in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, for more subtle reasons than one may imagine, and it may be a reduplication of this Sophoclean characteristic that Lacan has mistakenly stumbled upon in Poe's story.

Triadic scenes in Sophocles' work are not only triadic in the sense that three characters are partaking of such a scene, but also in the more subtle sense that it would have been possible for three actors to play the roles of each respective character, whereby the concept of *dramatis personae* becomes doubled, both literal and figurative, or more precisely, three-dimensional. There can now be such a number of "persons of a drama," as the Latin definition stipulates, so that character type and actor achieve a more synchronous fit, for lack of a better phrase. Sophocles played a major role in this, and I quote from the *Norton Anthology's* preamble to his *Oedipus Tyrannus*:

> It was he [Sophocles] who added a third actor to the team; the early Aeschylean plays (*Persians, Seven Against Thebes*, and *Suppliants*) can be played by two actors (who of course can change masks to extend the range of *dramatis personae*). In the *Oresteia*, Aeschylus has taken advantage of the Sophoclean third actor; this makes possible the role of Cassandra. But Sophocles used his third actor to create complex triangular scenes like the dialogue between Oedipus and the Corinthian messenger, which reveals to a listening Jocasta the ghastly truth that Oedipus will not discover until the next scene. (388)

What is interesting about Sophocles' addition of a third actor to the earlier Aeschylean set-up of two actors is that this addition makes *Oedipus Tyrannus* much more mimetic, and may in turn explain Aristotle's praise for it (but I will get to this later). We should keep in mind that if two actors will be playing in a triadic scene (requiring the representation of three characters), then it will indeed be necessary, at some point in the drama, for one of the actors to "exchange masks," as

the Norton preamble stipulates. This gesture, of course, would break the mimetic-visual illusion that we expect from drama (of seeing "living" characters), by calling attention to the presence of actors who take on the roles of fictional characters. In this way, Sophocles' addition of the third actor, which quite literally expands the range of *dramatis personae*, I would argue, allows for Lacan to take advantage of such an expansion toward the mimetic realm, in his "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" by reading a triadic structure into the two important scenes in Poe's tale, and then providing such a structure, because it occurs twice in the story, as evidence of passing on and "along" the purloined letter (literally and metaphorically), which he calls *repetition automatism* (328). In Lacan's view, of course, this repetition and "displacement" of the characters' subjectivity/position in the tale "is determined by the place which a pure signifier—the purloined letter—comes to occupy in their trio. And that is what will confirm for us its status as repetition automatism" (328). This repetition automatism, arising from the double presence of a triadic scene in Poe's tale, as Lacan would have it, is already seen, not as repetition, but as displacement of truth, revelation, letter, however we wish to call it, in Sophocles' particular use of the third actor whom he has brought into drama. As the *Norton* preamble mentioned, Sophocles' complex, triadic set-up of the Oedipus-Corinthian messenger-Jocasta dialogue allows for a "listening Jocasta" to grasp the message that "Oedipus will not discover until the next scene" (388).

Lacan, in his "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" speaks of how there "are two scenes, the first of which we shall straightway designate the primal scene, and by no means inadvertently, since the second may be considered its repetition in the very sense we are considering today" (325). Lacan's labelling of the first scene as "primal" is actually quite accurate, because it very efficiently duplicates the triadic scene in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, but Lacan does not seem to have grasped as completely the role of the second scene, which he thinks repeats the first. The problem is not with Lacan's idea that the second scene, when Dupin takes the letter from the Minister D—, is a repetition, but with his refusal to admit as significant the fact that Dupin visits D— "twice" in this second scene before taking the letter. In the first visit, he surveys the apartment for the letter in question, and in the second visit, he actually takes the letter, putting a facsimile in its place. These

two internal scenes of the second triadic scene in Poe's tale are separated by a small detail: Dupin guarantees himself a second visit to D—— by "leaving a gold snuff-box upon the table" (3:992). Lacan does not acknowledge that the dropping in of the "snuff-box" breaks the second triadic scene into two smaller ones, and he says that Dupin's decision to take the letter "is reached in a glance's time. For the maneuvers which follow, however stealthily they prolong it, add nothing to that glance, nor does the deferring of the deed in the second scene break the unity of that moment" (327). For Lacan, the general structure of each glance in the two triadic scenes is more significant than how the scenes, particularly the second one, are formed and "timed" by the presence of certain objects, like the snuff-box. He speaks as follows:

> This glance [Dupin's] presupposes two others, which it embraces in its vision of the breach left in their fallacious complementarity, anticipating in it the occasion for larceny afforded by that exposure. Thus three moments, structuring three glances, borne by three subjects, incarnated each time by different characters.
>
> The first is a glance that sees nothing: the King and the police.
>
> The second, a glance which sees that the first sees nothing and deludes itself as to the secrecy of what it hides: the Queen, then the Minister.
>
> The third sees that the first two glances leave what should be hidden exposed to whomever would seize it: the Minister, and finally Dupin. (327)

Lacan is obviously paying attention to the types of glances which are operating in Poe's tale, and he does this so as to be able to speak of the repetition automatism that the characters find themselves in, because in the movement from one triadic scene to another, the second one, the characters have their respective glances displaced, or rather, they take on new glances. Lacan believes that the main culprit behind this displacement, a culprit that is in fact the basis behind these triadic scenes, is of course the purloined letter itself, and he asks whether "a letter then, of all objects, [must] be endowed with the property of *nullibiety*:..." (333)? He answers the question in part by dealing with the purloined letter in Poe's work within the context of two triadic scenes that displace glances, or rather, glimpses of this letter: "Thus we are confirmed in our detour by the very object which draws us into it: for we are quite simply dealing with a letter which has been diverted from its path; one whose course has been *prolonged* (etymologically, the word of the title), or, to revert to the language of the post office, a *letter in sufferance*" (337).

Lacan's view of the purloined letter itself as being the cause of glance-displacement is nec-

essary for him to bring his own brand of structuralist psychoanalysis into the discussion, and the repetition automatism created by a duplication of the "primal" triadic scene becomes a new version of earlier, Freudian ideas of compulsion and repression. In turn, this displacement of glances, according to Lacan, explains the particular blindness or insight which the characters in the story possess. The major problem with Lacan's view, in my opinion, is the fundamental assumption operating here, that the purloined letter, as entity or symbol, or both, is in turn structuring the three glances of the characters, and is setting itself up for exchange in the two triadic scenes, when the Minister D—— takes it, and then when Dupin takes it. Such an assumption, that the letter is the determining factor of its own exchange or transfer, and of the glances which catch or do not catch this transfer, may not be altogether correct. Herbert Musurillo, in his *The Light and Darkness: Studies in the Dramatic Poetry of Sophocles*, instead of making a connection between the ontological nature of letters/messages and the depth of a character's glance, ties together the idea of glances (of vision or lack thereof) with characteristics more in keeping with Sophocles' expansion of the *dramatis personae*: "The imagery of the light and the dark, the vision and blindness, is allied with the tension between the wit of Oedipus and the divine wisdom of Teiresias" (87). What I am trying to say by throwing in such a comment is that in a play, as in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the nature and direction of a glance will be set up through an actor's attempt to match "wit" and "wisdom" with the character type requiring portrayal, which is a one-to-one relationship in the context of Sophocles' introduction of a third actor (who in turn pairs up with a single character type). In Poe's "The Purloined Letter," which is not designed to be performed as a literal play, we still have the idea of *dramatis personae* to deal with, but we now deal with it in a zero-to-one relationship, in the sense that the nature of the glances present will not be set up through an actor's attempt at matching wits, etc., but will be set up through the position the character types are found in, within the story. Lacan may have mistaken this zero-to-one relationship between actor and character in a literary work (not intended for the theatre) as being the relationship between the ontological nature of literature, purloined letters, etc., and the characters contained/portrayed in such works. Put simply, Lacan seems to have taken the pair {actor - character} and transformed it into {letter - character},

whereby he has substituted letter for actor, collapsing Sophocles' expansion of the *dramatis personae* back into the earlier Aeschylean mode, where, if we wish to dramatize tales like "The Purloined Letter," we will see, as the *Norton* preamble says of pre-Sophoclean Greek drama, *masks being exchanged*.

Rather than attempting to locate the purloined letter's displacement of the three characters who happen to surround it in the two triadic scenes, as Lacan does, I think it is equally effective first to attempt placing the characters in their respective roles as *dramatis personae* within Poe's tale, and then looking to see the line of transfer through which the letter moves from one character to another. In this case, because we are dealing with a short story instead of a Greek play, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, we have to keep in mind that, rather than seeing actors attempting to equate their wit and wisdom with that of the necessary character role, we are seeing characters who, however fictionally, are attempting to match wits with a letter that keeps floating about. By approaching Poe's "The Purloined Letter" in such a manner, I have not overburdened myself by trying to find the exact, symbolic place in which the purloined letter resides in any of the triadic scenes, as Lacan has attempted. Looking for the letter's place, a letter that even Lacan speculates may "be endowed with the property of *nullibiety*," would be an endeavor quite similar to that in which the Prefect of Police engages, thinking that if the letter cannot be found by him, then it must still be literally hidden behind a mirror, or inside of a chair's leg, and so on. Lacan's mistake may be that he only gives the purloined letter a literal place of residence within the two triadic scenes, and thereby downplays the significance of its metaphoric, or rather, symbolic residence in these triadic scenes, but this in itself may not be of such importance as the practical consequence of a linking between the letter's literal and symbolic presence. The letter is exchanged in these scenes not because it moves by itself (which may be what Lacan is saying), or because a draft blows it across a table, but because the characters (some of them) have bestowed enough significance on this letter to make it move back and forth. As the Prefect of Police himself says, "the holder of the document" has "an ascendancy over [things]," in this case over the Queen (*Poe* 3:976).

With such an idea in mind, that the letter is only symbolically/metaphorically present in

the full sense of the term because of its literal "property of *nullibiety*," and in turn, that its symbolic impetus gives it literal movement, I was intrigued enough to set up brief character sequences for the triadic scenes in Poe's tale, and also for the triadic scene in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*. As I suspected, Lacan was entirely correct in labelling the first triadic scene "primal," because its features almost completely duplicate the triadic scene in Sophocles' work, when the Corinthian messenger spills the truth. The second triadic scene in Poe's tale, when Dupin counter-maneuvers the Minister D—, is, as I speculated earlier, more accurately understood if looked upon as two separate triadic scenes, broken by the intrusion of Dupin's "snuff-box," that, when put together, create an impetus consistent with that of the first triadic scene, the one described as "primal." To be consistent with Lacan's important description of the three glances which constitute these scenes, I retained the same numerical value for the respective characters. Since Lacan spoke of the "first" glance as seeing nothing, I ascribed a value of "one" to the character possessing such a glance, and so on. My only variation on Lacan's endeavors was that I also added a positive or negative value to each of the numbers being ascribed to the respective characters (reminiscent of electron charges), to indicate their relationship with the purloined letter; if a character actively searches for the meaning/letter, then the value ascribed is positively charged, while passive behavior, where a character is either unaware or unable to engage the purloined letter, is given a negatively charged value. In this context, of course, the purloined letter is seen to flow from negatively to positively charged areas, providing that the positive value is numerically larger, not smaller, than the negative value. The results, while they look cryptic, are as follows. In the case of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the triadic scene is structured by the following character sequence: {Corinthian messenger 3^- + Oedipus 1^+ + Jocasta 2^+}. In Poe's "The Purloined Letter," we technically have three triadic scenes, the last two of which complement and overlap each other: {Queen 2^- + King 1^- + Minister D 3^+}, {Minister D 3^- + Dupin 2^- + Police 1^+}, {Minister D 1^- + Musket man 2^+ + Dupin 3^+}. In Sophocles' play, the letter is first absorbed by the 2^+ charge, Jocasta, while it takes a bit longer for the 1^+ charge, Oedipus, to grasp the truth, and of course, the letter is allowed to pass to the 2^+

charge by the 3^- charge, the Corinthian messenger, who does initially arrive with and holds the letter, but gives it up passively, being unaware of the consequences, thinking that he is setting things right. In Poe's tale, the first triad gives us a sequence in which the letter is absorbed fully by the 3^+ charge, the Minister D——, while the 1^- charge, the King, is completely uninfluential on the letter's path of exchange, and the 2^- charge, the Queen, is aware of the letter's transference but unable to modify this transference, since the 3^+ charge controls the scene. The second triad is different, because the letter is not transferred anywhere; the letter is retained by the 3^- charge, the Minister D——, who possesses it rather passively, the letter is spotted in its place of residence by the 2^- charge, Dupin, who also passively observes it, affecting no changes, and the 1^+ charge, the Prefect and Police, however actively they search for the letter, cannot transfer it towards them because of their analytical weakness, in this case represented by the lowest number in the scene (irrespective of the positive charge attributed to it). The third triad, separated from the second by the interjection of Dupin's "snuff-box," is a bit of a variation on the second one; here, the 1^- charge, the Minister D——, is neither glancing at the letter nor is he aware of its transference, because of the diversion which is provided by the 2^+ charge, the man with the musket who is employed by Dupin to make a disturbance in the street below, and this man, who may or may not be aware of the letter's presence, is nonetheless actively engaged in transferring it over to Dupin, who is of course the 3^+ charge, since he actually takes the letter, and is all the while conscious of the feeble interaction between the 2^+ and 1^- charges, the street commotion and the Minister D——, respectively.

The above described character sequences, which structure the triadic scenes in Poe's "The Purloined Letter," are a slightly different way of looking at things than Lacan's method, in which it is the purloined letter that displaces the characters' glances from one scene to another. I believe that two fundamental points arise out of the kind of analysis that I have offered, in which the characters interact with and influence the purloined letter's path. The first point which arises, and which has been implied throughout this discussion, is that Poe's tale, specifically, the triadic

scenes in which the letter is glimpsed and/or exchanged, stay quite close to the structure of the triadic scene in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and in turn, this similarity may in part account for Lacan's emphasis on these scenes in Poe's story. Lacan's tendency to psychoanalyze linguistically about character displacement in these triadic scenes may have been a tendency that was even drawn out further through the psychoanalytic history that is already embedded in these scenes, a history that goes back to the proto-psychoanalytic nature of the triadic scene in Sophocles' play, where the Corinthian messenger's letter is first transferred to Jocasta, and only later transferred to Oedipus, a delayed transfer not in Lacan's "post office" sense of the phrase, but in an obviously dramatic and literary sense: delayed messages build psychoanalytic depth in literature, as in Poe's tale, and they create an effect of psychic confrontation in drama, as in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, by stretching the abilities of Sophocles' reworked idea of *dramatis personae* to the limit. The real drama is not in seeing where the displaced object resides, but in seeing how far the message goes.

The second, and in my opinion, less obvious point which arises out of the kind of "electron" analysis that I have offered of the triadic scenes, is that Lacan's remark on the purloined letter's "property of *nullibiety*" is echoed in the sum of the charges for the characters in each scene where the letter is glanced at and/or exchanged. I will elaborate. In Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the character sequence for the triadic scene gives us the following sum total: {Corinthian messenger 3^- + Oedipus 1^+ + Jocasta $2^+ = 0$}. The first triadic scene in Poe's "The Purloined Letter" gives us the same sum total: {Queen 2^- + King 1^- + Minister D $3^+ = 0$}. This in part explains Lacan's description of this first scene as "primal," and indeed, it stays true to the Sophoclean triad, even though Poe reverses the charges on the King and Queen, and on the third character, thereby creating a mirror image of the scene in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, or rather, a scene reminiscent of the daguerreotype, which inverts the image of the photographed subject. The last two triadic scenes in Poe's tale, while pairing together, do not give a sum total of zero. In the second triad, we have the following result: {Minister D 3^- + Dupin 2^- + Police $1^+ = 4^-$}. In the third triad, we have the following result: {Minister D 1^- + Musket man 2^+ + Dupin $3^+ = 4^+$}. However, when the last two triads are put together, and the sum total is taken, we get the following result: {$4^- + 4^+ = 0$}. And so, the net

result of the separate actions of the last two triads is equivalent to the result of the first, "primal" scene in Poe's tale, as Lacan calls it, which is in turn equivalent to the result of the Sophoclean triad. Lacan's mentioning of the possible nullibiety of the purloined letter becomes clearer after this balancing of sums. The letter only exposes itself to possible nullibiety (in the literal sense) when it is in the process of being transferred, and that nullibiety becomes certain in two of the four triads analyzed. The letter is literally reduced to zero in the Sophoclean triad, where after it is passed to Jocasta, and later to Oedipus, only its effect remains, best illustrated by the Chorus' comment which ends that scene, as Jocasta flees: "Why has the queen gone, Oedipus, in wild / grief rushing from us? I am afraid that trouble / will break out of this silence" (2:58). The letter is also reduced to zero (at least for a while) after being passed to the Minister D—— in the first triad of Poe's tale, because after taking it he proceeds to fold it inside-out and thereby he disguises it (but I will speak of this peculiarity later). The letter is not reduced to zero in the second triad in Poe's tale because here it is not exchanged, only glanced at and left in place by Dupin, and the sum total of that sequence was not surprisingly 4^{-}. In the third triad of Poe's tale, where the letter is indeed being transferred, and thus prone to literal nullibiety, the letter surprisingly manages to remain intact, and is taken by Dupin, and the sum of that sequence is 4^{+}. Not only does the letter remain intact, together with whatever message it contains inside, but Dupin leaves a facsimile of it in the same spot where it previously stood in the Minister D——'s apartment, in "a trumpery fillagree card-rack of pasteboard, that hung dangling by a dirty blue ribbon from a little brass knob just beneath the middle of the mantel-piece" (3:990-1). And in that facsimile, Dupin even scribbles down a message for D——, supposedly from Crébillon's *Atrée*: "—Un dessein si funeste, / S'il n'est digne d'Atrée, est digne de Thyeste" (3:993). This facsimile stands as a marker of the original letter's triumph over nullibiety in the last triadic scene of the tale, precisely because Dupin does not leave it blank, but inscribes a message. The Minister D—— also left a substitute letter on the Queen's desk when he took the original one, but that letter, as the Prefect of Police says, was not significant: "The minister decamped; leaving his own letter—one of no importance—upon the table" (3:977). Lacan also implies that this letter may not mean much: "A *remainder* that no analyst

will neglect, trained as he is to retain whatever is significant, without always knowing what to do with it: the letter, abandoned by the Minister, and which the Queen's hand is now free to roll into a ball" (326).

Dupin seems well aware of the possible nullibiety that the original purloined letter is faced with in moments of transfer, and he speaks of this in "The Purloined Letter" with the narrator. When the narrator speculates that the letter may not even be hidden on the Minister D——'s premises, Dupin rejects this assumption, reasoning as follows: "The present peculiar condition of affairs at court, and especially of those intrigues in which D—— is known to be involved, would render the instant availability of the document—its susceptibility of being produced at a moment's notice—a point of nearly equal importance with its possession. 'Its susceptibility of being produced?' [asks the narrator]. That is to say, of being *destroyed*..." (3:978). The narrator also questions Dupin as to why he bothered replacing the letter with a facsimile, instead of simply taking the letter "at the first visit" and departing, and Dupin responds as follows, once again reminding us of the potential nullibiety that a letter faces when in transfer, and for that matter, anyone close to the letter when it is in transfer: "D——...is a desperate man, and a man of nerve. His hotel, too, is not without attendants devoted to his interests. Had I made the wild attempt you suggest, I might never have left the Ministerial presence alive. The good people of Paris might have heard of me no more" (3:992). It could be the purloined letter's potential for being "destroyed," as Dupin says, that Lacan in turn has read as displacement of the characters' glances, from one triad to another. Lacan reasons, as I spoke earlier, that the purloined letter is the main culprit behind the displacement of the characters' glances and the production of a shifting blindness. I of course argued, rather cryptically at moments, that the shifting glances of the characters may in turn be redirecting the purloined letter along its path. This redirecting of the letter in its voyage hides it from view (for some of the characters) and quite literally, in that context, it is destroyed. The letter, not surprisingly, disappears from sight (is destroyed) most usually while being transferred from place to place, as in the case when the Corinthian messenger rather passively gives it over to Jocasta, or in the case when the Minister D—— takes the letter from the Queen. This is certainly one

way of looking at Lacan's description of the letter as having the "property of *nullibiety*." And the fact that the message of the letter may continue even if it is literally destroyed (messages can easily be rewritten) does not take away from such an interpretation, because its possible nullibiety only occurs at a literal level, when the letter as an object is moved, removed, and so on.

The tendency for this letter to be more metaphorically than literally stable (where it is tossed about) may explain this tale's susceptibility to psychoanalytic surveys, such as Lacan's. Indeed, we never actually find out the message that was written in the purloined letter, but we do realize that it has meaning for the characters who surround it and in fact trap it briefly within the few triadic scenes. The purloined letter is quite literally visible in these triadic scenes, when it is glanced at and/or transferred, while in most of the narrative, it remains hidden from view. In this way, the role of the triadic scenes within Poe's "The Purloined Letter" becomes rather obvious; they serve as spotlights which focus in on the literal aspect of the letter's presence, while outside of this spotlight, the purloined letter still moves along, but only metaphorically. The triadic scenes in Poe's tale can therefore be seen as later historical developments of the triadic scene in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, that also serves to spotlight the presence of the message which will finally make its way to Oedipus. But there, of course, the message is delivered orally by the Corinthian messenger, and so, its literal presence (as a written letter) cannot be emphasized. But this is precisely because this play is designed to work theatrically, where actors, pairing up with character types (through Sophocles' expansion of the *dramatis personae*), must attempt to carry the letter along. And in this context, Poe's triadic scenes in "The Purloined Letter," which Lacan believes are cases of repetition automatism via glance-displacement, are actually two-dimensional foils for Sophocles' introduction of the third actor, an introduction which allowed for a one-to-one pairing between actor and character. Poe's triads are thus *simulations of dramatis personae*, where the characters approximate real-time dramatic endeavors by moving a literal "letter" around. By arguing for an ontological peculiarity to the purloined letter, which displaces the characters' glances, Lacan seems to look upon Poe's tale as an example of the Aeschylean mode of acting, where there will always be one more character than actor, and so, dramatic representation will naturally go out

of sync as the actors begin to exchange masks because of their numerical inadequacy. Nonetheless, I think that Poe's tale is more Sophoclean than Aeschylean because, even though there are moments of reflexivity, the characters still go along with the simulation.

My remarks on "The Purloined Letter" and on Lacan's analysis of the tale are not meant to undermine the importance of what Lacan is saying in relation to his own brand of psychoanalysis, and besides, Poe's tale offered itself as an example through which Lacan could illustrate his theories. Shawn James Rosenheim, in his *The Cryptographic Imagination: Secret Writing from Edgar Poe to the Internet*, provides a comment on "The Purloined Letter" which nicely explains its primary interest for theoreticians and psychoanalysts:

> In sharp contrast to the outdoor settings of "Marie Rogêt," or even to the street scenes in "Rue Morgue," "The Purloined Letter" retreats from the boulevards, parks, and waterways of the teeming city, with their social and sexual ambiguities, into the enclosed and private spaces of Minister D——'s chambers. The remarkable success of "The Purloined Letter" as a locus for literary and psychoanalytic theory—indeed, as one of *the* venues in which French theory has translated itself into American theory—begins to seem the consequence of playing cards with a stacked deck. The tale's theoretical richness arises because "The Purloined Letter" is already supremely two-dimensional, already overtly concerned with allegorizing the operations of the signifier. (69)

However, what I am pointing out is that perhaps there is a different way to read this tale than Lacan's, not for the sake of difference alone, but for more subtle reasons: by looking at the tale in a slightly different manner than Lacan, perhaps the reasons for Lacan's preference to respond to the tale in the first place will then slowly emerge, in the sense that we are leaving room for these reasons to emerge, by not reduplicating Lacan. It is because of these difficult maneuvers on my part that I have focused so much, in the last section, on the presence/location of the characters in each of the triadic scenes in Poe's tale, and in *Oedipus Tyrannus*. I stumbled upon a similarity between Lacan's speculation that the purloined letter may have the "property of *nullibiety*" and the results of my own "electron" analysis of the character sequences in the triadic scenes, and one of my conclusions was that the letter is most clearly advertising its nullibiety when it is in transfer, going from place to place, and being hidden at each turn. And this reduction to zero of the letter's literal presence in part helped to explain Lacan's need to read this tale as a case of repetition automatism, where a letter displaces the glances of characters precisely because of its ontological

peculiarity, its presence as zero, or rather, its absence as presence. I however remain skeptical of the possible revolutionary features in representation which Lacan sees in Poe's tale and I concluded the last section by drawing a subtle distinction between purely reflexive areas where Lacan seems to place Poe's tale (where masks are exchanged, as in the Aeschylean two actor mode), pure incidents of the *dramatis personae* at work (as in Sophocles' three actor mode, where actor and character pair up cleanly), and transitional moments where we see a *simulation of dramatis personae* at work (which I believe can be seen in Poe's tale, where a literary, two-dimensional plane is still used to juggle three-dimensional issues). In this way, Poe's "The Purloined Letter" is perhaps more accurately described as *mimetically peculiar* than as revolutionary in terms of reflexive representation. The tale seems to stretch concepts to their breaking point, but never openly undermines them. The characters, as seen in the triadic scenes, are transparent actors, precisely because through their ritualization of a letter's movement—they champion the cause of letters.

While the purloined letter makes its nullibiety obvious when in transfer, being reduced to a value of zero (as seen in my analysis of the relevant triadic scenes), and while this may account for Lacan's susceptibility to read such a zero status as a peculiarity that blinds different characters to the letter's presence and importance, the last two triadic scenes in "The Purloined Letter," which are separated by the throwing in of Dupin's "snuff-box," do not give a sum total of zero when the character values are added up, which would indicate possible nullibiety on the letter's part. On the contrary, as I mentioned earlier, the value of those scenes was 4^{-} (for Dupin's first visit) and 4^{+} (for Dupin's second visit). This is perhaps even more ontologically peculiar than the previous triadic scenes, where the letter is transferred and reduced to zero. In the case of Dupin's first visit to the Minister D—, there is no transference of the letter, but a glance at it, perhaps an analysis, and nothing more, and the letter remains physically present in that triadic scene, which explains the value of 4 (symbolizing the corners and/or sides of the physical letter in question). But what of the negative charge ascribed to that value of 4? I think that it effectively conveys the special presence of the letter in this specific triadic scene. Lacan's fascination is held by the letter as it comes close to a value of zero, being transferred about, and in his account, controlling the char-

acters through that very transference, by approaching zero. I, of course, have argued that it is the characters who transfer this letter around, thereby reducing its literal presence to zero, and simultaneously, themselves approaching a simulation of the idea of *dramatis personae*. Lacan and I have approached the issue of zero-ness from two different perspectives. But more importantly, those were scenes in which the letter was in transference. In order to attempt grasping the ontological nature of a letter, I would suggest, it may be more plausible to begin with the letter *in stasis*. The second triadic scene in Poe's tale is a case in point, where Dupin looks upon the letter, and speculates on its identity. The 4^- charge which I have ascribed to it indicates its peculiarity in that instance: the letter is indeed present, but it is also literally hidden, because it has been refolded and resealed, and this creates an impression that the letter exists both in the open and behind a veil or mirror, so to speak. And this impression, of reversal, inversion, however we call it, is more significant for our attempt to understand the mechanics of the purloined letter (and of the surrounding characters) than the zero-ness which results from transference. In a way, that zero-ness is hardly impressive compared to the peculiarity which Dupin stumbles upon, because, to be sure, the letter is reduced to zero as it is transferred from one character to another in the previous triadic scenes, and in that transference, it also leaves those triadic scenes, entering into the darker, more metaphoric regions of the tale (where it is not physically illuminated). Lacan does not appear to find the purloined letter's reversal all that significant, except in the sense that this is one more piece of evidence for the letter's control on the characters, in this case through repression of the unconscious, while Dupin, on the other hand, content with not looking for premature conclusions, observes the letter in all its physicality, as it rests at the Minister D——'s residence, and thereby, he comes close to exposing its nature. I will quote Dupin's observation of the letter in its setting, where it sits in reverse (being refolded previously by D——):

> It was torn nearly in two, across the middle—as if a design, in the first instance, to tear it entirely up as worthless, had been altered, or stayed, in the second. It had a large black seal, bearing the D—— cipher *very* conspicuously, and was addressed, in a diminutive female hand, to D——, the minister, himself. It was thrust carelessly, and even, as it seemed, contemptuously, into one of the upper divisions of the rack....In scrutinizing the edges of the paper, I observed them to be more *chafed* than seemed necessary. They presented the *broken* appearance which is manifested when a stiff paper, having been once in the same creases or edges which had

formed the original fold. This discovery was sufficient. It was clear to me that the letter had been turned, as a glove, inside out, re-directed, and re-sealed. (*Poe* 3:991-2)

The following are Lacan's comments on that scene:

> Thus we first learn that the Minister in turn has *turned the letter over*, not, of course, as in the Queen's hasty gesture, but, more assiduously, as one turns a garment inside out. So he must proceed, according to the methods of the day for folding and sealing a letter, in order to free the virgin space on which to inscribe a new address.
>
> That address becomes his own. Whether it be in his hand or another, it will appear in an extremely delicate feminine script, and, the seal changing from the red of passion to the black of its mirrors, he will imprint his stamp upon it. This oddity of a letter marked with the recipient's stamp is all the more striking in its conception, since, though forcefully articulated in the text, it is not even mentioned by Dupin in the discussion he devotes to the identification of the letter.
>
> Whether that omission be intentional or involuntary, it will surprise in the economy of a work whose meticulous rigor is evident. But in either case it is significant that the letter which the Minister, in point of fact, addresses to himself is a letter from a woman: as though this were a phase he had to pass through out of a natural affinity of the signifier. (341)

The purloined letter, after being refolded by D——, is certainly peculiar, most obviously because it bears the cipher of the person to whom it is addressed, and thus, Lacan implies that this is a phase the Minister must pass through out of affinity with the signifier. More seriously, though, the D—— cipher which is placed on the refolded letter focuses our attention on its unusual status of existing behind and/or in a mirror, so to speak. The letter, in its original state, was addressed to the Queen and had the sign of the S—— family on it, indicating a rather linear progression from the sender to the receiver of a message. By refolding the letter and putting his own sign on it, D—— gives the letter a new status it had not held previously: it no longer represents a message in the typical sense, of providing information that is accumulated through transference, but now represents messages that are more psychologically potent, messages of self-recognition, where one, by reading a letter, comes in contact with one's own product. In this case, the refolding of the letter is the work of D——, and quite unsurprisingly, it thus bears his cipher; the fact that the hidden, inverted content of the letter was originally intended for the Queen does not disrupt such an interpretation of this letter, as standing in for self-recognition. The refolded message, precisely because it has been refolded, creates the illusion of historical layering and development, in the sense that this letter has had a long life. If the Minister D—— chances to look at the refolded letter while sitting in his apartment, he will recognize his own hard work and machination in it, or rather, he will

see his own imprint on it, quite literally displayed by the self-same D— cipher, which Lacan tends to view as a peculiarity, perhaps even the result of careless editing. It is thus interesting, and in keeping with this new self-posting status of the letter, that Dupin, after leaving a facsimile in its place in the last triadic scene, inscribes a quotation from Crébillon into the middle of the blank sheet, indicating that the Minister "is well acquainted with [his] MS.,..." (3: 993). In this way, when D— opens that letter and looks at it, a letter which by the way has a duplicate of his D— cipher on its outside, he will again go through an act of self-recognition, in this case recognizing that the refolded letter is also the cause of his failure, and also recognizing Dupin's signature. Or rather, self-recognition means death in this tale, which may explain why Dupin only analyzes others, but it also explains the mechanism operating in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*.

Indeed, Lacan has every right to describe D—'s peculiar relationship with this refolded letter as being a phase through which affinities with the signifier are seen, or felt, but the power of self-recognition which the letter acquires after being refolded, after being transformed into a mirror, is more historically situated than the idea of "signifier" alone can convey. My point here is not to discuss the similarities and/or differences between signifiers and mirrors, but I do want to bring up the idea that Lacan himself may have been tempted into reading the triadic scenes the way he did through this reversal which the letter goes through in the second triad, when Dupin describes its nature and structure, after D— has tampered with it. And Lacan's reading of the tale becomes all the more interesting when we remember his emphasis on the shifting blindness and insight of the characters, which he believes is a shift controlled by the letter's possibility of nullibiety. I am taking a slightly different approach than Lacan, because, according to what I have said so far, that the letter is given the power of self-recognition through refolding, the mechanics of insight and/or blindness in "The Purloined Letter" will best be illustrated when the characters speculate on the nature of the letter itself, and not when they transfer it from place to place. It may be possible that the only major difference between Lacan's reading of the tale and my own reading is our emphasis on particular triads, Lacan preferring the first "primal" scene and I preferring the two secondary ones which he thinks are only one scene, but the fundamental point of this argu-

ment was to see if Lacan is in his own reading of this tale at times evoking images and/or ideas from a larger narrative tradition of ratiocinative/psychological fiction, possibly stretching back to *Oedipus Tyrannus*, without fully bringing this potential tradition to the surface, and I think he is.

Lacan's bestowing of significance onto the letter's ontological peculiarity as a shifting signifier, which also shifts character blindness and insight, was reversed in the earlier section of the discussion when I argued that the ontological peculiarity of the characters (their presence as *simulated dramatis personae*) was responsible for the letter's shifts, and not the other way around. This reversal in argument is similar to D——'s reversal of the Queen's letter, because while Lacan was fascinated by the letter's predisposition to remain a letter, and to be transferred, I was working hard to bring an extra dimension into it, that of self-recognition, or mirroring. This mirroring was already taking place when I saw remnants of *Oedipus Tyrannus* in Poe's "The Purloined Letter," in the same way that remnants of the Queen's letter remain hidden inside of D——'s newly reversed, resealed, and re-ciphered letter. And this is the heart of the problem: Lacan and D—— seem to recipher, while Dupin and I attempt to decipher. But at that point where we can see the movement to recipher shifting into the movement to decipher, as we do when Dupin outlines what has really happened to this letter, which is hidden in the open by being reversed, and only because of this, Lacan's arguments and my disagreements appear to blend. Lacan implies that the refolding of the letter, which will require unfolding, etc., signals the resurfacing of the signifier, and this resurfacing requires a reversal, which is seen, as Lacan also says, through the way D—— addresses himself on the refolded letter, "in a diminutive female hand" (3: 991). Poe makes this reversal literal, since signatures change and the letter is reversed, but this reversal was once symbolic in different ways, sometimes metaphoric, and in that primordial stage, Lacan's idea of shifting, surfacing, and resurfacing signifiers is accounted for, at the moment of its inception, when Aristotle gives us a definition of *anagnorisis*, offering praise for Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* at the same time, a work that may have been in Lacan's mind when he described the first triad in Poe's tale, when D—— takes the Queen's letter, as "primal."

Aristotle's comments on reversal and recognition in a plot, in his *Poetics*, not only clarify

what is happening in *Oedipus Tyrannus* but also touch upon the nature of refolded letters per se, and this can in turn be applied to Poe's tale. Of recognition (*anagnorisis*), Aristotle says the following:

> Recognition, as the word itself indicates, is a change from ignorance to knowledge, leading either to friendship or to hostility on the part of those persons who are marked for good fortune or bad. The best form of recognition is that accompanied by a reversal, as in the example from *Oedipus*. There are, to be sure, other forms of recognition—and, indeed, what I have just said may occur in reference to inanimate objects or anything whatever, and it is possible to discover that someone has or has not done something—but the form that has most to do with the plot, and most to do with the action, is the one I have mentioned; for a recognition joined thus with a reversal will be fraught with pity and fear (the type of action tragedy is presumed to imitate) because misery and happiness alike will come to be realized in recognitions of this kind....[and when speaking of different kinds of recognition, Aristotle adds that] the best is that which springs from the events themselves, the shock of surprise having thus a probable basis. Such are the recognitions in the *Oedipus* of Sophocles and in *Iphigeneia* [by Polyidus the Sophist]: it is probable that Iphigeneia should wish to send a letter. Only recognitions of this kind escape the artificiality of tokens and necklaces. Next best are recognitions that result from reasoning. (56-62)

Aristotle's comment, on how the best recognition requires a reversal, is seen in the triadic scene in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, when the reversal is just beginning, when the Corinthian messenger attempts to comfort Oedipus by telling him that Merope and Polybus are not his real parents, and causes more suspicion, which in turn leads to revelation. While Aristotle believes that such reversal of outlook, fortune, reality, etc., is the best kind of recognition, he does say that recognition may also "occur in reference to inanimate objects or anything whatever," and this in part explains what is happening in "The Purloined Letter" when D—— refolds the letter and sees his own cipher on it, which he has placed there, and later, when he sees Dupin's handwriting in the facsimile of this letter, that has an identical D—— cipher on the outside. It is likely that Aristotle prefers the kind of purely metaphoric/symbolic recognition that Oedipus goes through, without the nuisance of literal devices of recognition, and he clarifies such an attitude by saying later how certain recognitions "escape the artificiality of tokens and necklaces," but of course, we must remember, the purloined letter in Poe's tale functions as something more symbolically significant than a mere token or gesture, because it is what the tale revolves around, so to speak. I would say that Poe has combined the literal device of recognition (a real, physical letter) with the more metaphoric kind of recognition that Aristotle prefers, as in Sophocles' play, and he therefore comes quite close to having devised a

tale that might be described as Aristotelian, or at least pseudo-Aristotelian. After all, Aristotle does say that the next best form of recognition, besides a purely symbolic one, is the kind that results "from reasoning," and such a recognition results when Dupin intuits that the letter is hidden in the open, and more importantly, when he recognizes that the letter has been refolded. I would suspect that the kind of recognition which takes place beyond the limits of Poe's tale, when it is implied that D— will recognize Dupin's handwriting in the facsimile of the stolen letter, will be quite close to the kind of Sophoclean recognition that Aristotle had in mind, and in fact, that form of recognition would then become a textbook example of Aristotle's definition of *anagnorisis*.

The mechanics of *anagnorisis* are already present in Dupin's description of the letter, as it sits in the Minister D—'s residence, in its refolded state. The original message, intended for the Queen, is now located deep inside the letter, which has been resealed with D—'s cipher, and the letter, as I argued earlier, becomes a type of mirror, ready only to reflect what has previously been put into it, and nothing else. As I also said, the refolding of the letter becomes analogous to the layering of history, and equally so, to the passage of time. The refolding of the letter corresponds with the three primary moments that the story is concerned with, the first moment being when the letter was folded only once and sent to the Queen, with its intended message (this being a moment that is only implied in the story, having already occurred when the tale begins), the second moment being represented by the letter in its refolded state, when D— further embeds the original message deeper within the folds, and the third moment being represented by Dupin's countermaneuver to D—, which once again unfolds the letter and brings it back to its original recipient, the Queen. While Lacan had argued that the letter may have the property of nullibiety, being reducible to zero (literally), I had broken down the last triadic scene of the tale into two smaller ones, which were given the value of 4^- and 4^+, respectively. While the sum total of those triads gives a value of zero again, each triad alone is a moment in time, so to speak, symbolizing the stages of *anagnorisis* through which the letter unfolds its real meaning to Dupin, but also to the Minister D—. When Dupin spots the letter, recognizing its refolded state and that D— has done the refolding, it has a value of 4^-, since it is literally present (with its four corners and/or sides) but

only inversely so, the D—— cipher and "diminutive female hand" serving as camouflage. Once Dupin actually takes the letter, through the help of the hired diversion (the man with the musket), the letter once again acquires its expected ontological status, of 4^{+}, since it is now unfolded and given to the Queen, via the Prefect of Police. The letter is at that point no longer a step removed from its actual presence, for lack of a better phrase, but then again, perhaps this is as good a definition of *anagnorisis* as Aristotle's, that it is the process whereby things fall back into their actual presence, both literally and metaphorically.

I have spoken of how Aristotle's concept of recognition comes into play, rather specifically, as Dupin contemplates the nature of the refolded purloined letter, as that letter is once again unfolded and sent back to the Queen, and particularly as the facsimile of the letter is unfolded by D——, only to find the Crébillon quotation inside, but on a more general note, I have said that the refolded letter is analogous to historical layering, and also to the idea of time, because every fold seems to mark off a moment in the text. David Metzger, in his *The Lost Cause of Rhetoric: The Relation of Rhetoric and Geometry in Aristotle and Lacan*, finds himself speaking of Aristotle's concept of *dunamis* (a being qua other), and while this concept is more problematic than that of *anagnorisis*, many of his comments are applicable to Poe's "The Purloined Letter," and allow for further elaboration. Specifically, Metzger says that "Aristotle's specification of the existence of rhetoric as a *dunamis* introduces time into the discussion of being;...[and] such an existence is not a being as such but a being qua timing,...[and because Aristotle ties rhetorical modes to time he] avoids the category error Lacan argues (in *Seminar XI*) is constitutive of philosophy: associating existence with meaning and knowledge without the intermediary cuts of desire" (37). Metzger's interpretation of Aristotle's *dunamis* as a "being qua timing" is quite similar to the mechanism by which the purloined letter operates in Poe's tale. Lacan emphasized how the letter's movement is analogous to the shifting of a signifier, that in turn moves the characters' blind spots around, but I focused differently on "The Purloined Letter," arguing that the letter is only really there (literally present) in the triadic scenes where its exchange is contemplated and enacted, while beyond these scenes, it tends to move through metaphoric currents, through darkness. In this way, it is the very structure

of those triadic scenes that times the letter's being, so to speak, or to put it differently, we can see elements of Aristotle's *dunamis* at work in the triadic scenes, particularly when the letter's exchange is enacted, but also to an extent in the triadic scene where it rests only *in stasis* at D—'s place, when *anagnorisis* begins to play an equally significant role. Metzger's statement, that for Lacan existence is always cut through by desire, nicely echoes Lacan's own comment, that by refolding the letter and scribbling in a female hand on it, D— is passing through a stage of "affinity" for and/or of the signifier.

The main importance of Metzger's discussion, in relation to our attempt at understanding Poe's story and Lacan's willingness to respond to it, becomes clear when he elaborates on Aristotle's theory of place, how things have "a place as part of the whole" and how "those things that always exist separately are never actualized as parts but always exist as potentialities (*dunameis*)—and curiously, not potentialities for themselves but for their places" (47-8). This comment sheds much light on my own analysis of the triadic sequences in Poe's tale, and in Sophocles' play, for that matter, because, as Metzger says, things only have "a place as part of the whole," while separately, they can at best anticipate their place in a future and whole location. This is exactly the way the purloined letter travels through Poe's tale, and it is only really actualized within the triadic scenes in which it exists, literally and metaphorically, as part of a whole, part of an interaction and exchange between the characters who contemplate the letter and the letter that awaits contemplation. This is the reason why, early on in this discussion, I stated that I would not attempt locating the purloined letter's exact, symbolic location in the triadic scenes, but would rather attempt locating its exchange by analyzing the character types first. At that point, I had stated that Lacan's tendency to speculate on the purloined letter's possible nullibiety may be the result of his overemphasis on finding the letter's exact location, to close it off for scrutiny. As Metzger says, attempting to define Aristotle's theory of place, "those things that exist separately are never actualized as parts" and do not exist as "potentialities for themselves but for their places." Lacan labels the letter as possibly nullifiable because in siphoning it off, he cannot *actualize it as a part*, but rather, stumbles into a void which Derrida will later take advantage of and elaborate on. Lacan's

main statement in his article on "The Purloined Letter" is that while "a letter always arrives at its destination....the signifier...[is] by nature symbol only of an absence" (334-46), but he does not appear to see that these voids he stumbles into, these moments of nullibiety for the letter, are potentialities for its future place, as in the later triads in the tale, when the letter indeed surfaces back into existence, in a scenic whole, where Dupin unfolds it and passes it back to its first recipient, the Queen, and when D— unfolds the facsimile Dupin has left for him. If, as Metzger says of Lacan, existence for him is not only meaning but also the "intermediary cuts of desire," then it is interesting to speculate that in Lacan's attempt to siphon off the purloined letter for scrutiny, he has also broken himself off from ever reaching it through those same cuts of desire, cuts which not only separate the triadic scenes from the rest of "The Purloined Letter" and from each other, but also duplicate those scenes to begin with, delaying the return of the letter to its initial recipient. Unlike Lacan, who actually looked for the letter's nullibiety per se, I was content to find the nullibiety echoed in the sum total of the triadic scenes which I looked at, which was always zero, even in the last two, which, when put together, also give a value of zero, indicating that while zero-ness cannot directly be attributed to the letter itself, it can result as an overall effect of its transference, or rather, the zero-ness may itself be a sign of the cut of desire. Lacan may have indeed stumbled on remnants of Aristotelian theory in Poe's "The Purloined Letter," in the same way that he seems to have played upon the Sophoclean foundation for the triadic scenes, but perhaps not being fully conscious of these remnants and of the fact that Poe's tale is itself analogous to the purloined letter after D— refolds it, he tends to view the zero-ness of the signifier in a mostly literal, rather than metaphoric sense. As Metzger says, only "a smudge of a zero is found in Aristotle's theorization of *dunamis* and in its temporal correlate, *the now*. What isn't found, in Aristotle, is how zero is a *part* (a metonymy) and not just a place, how it might be an element in a numerical series..." (108). Lacan seems to attempt locating the purloined letter as a metonymic zero, an absent part, something that resembles a Hegelian endeavor, since the notion of zero-as-a-part is an idealization, a construct of later mathematics: Hans-Georg Gadamer cautions against the false closure which results from such thinking by bringing in another of Aristotle's notions, *phronesis* (practical wisdom, recogni-

tion of finitude, historicity, etc.) as a counterbalance to Platonic *episteme* and the subjectivity of the Hegelian dialectic (qtd. in Hoy 60).

While Metzger's comments on *dunamis* are specific and help to clarify my own interpretation of the refolded purloined letter, and how such a refolding cuts Poe's text into moments of time that correspond with the literally changing state of that letter (its external features), I had on a more general level speculated that the refolded letter is analogous to historical layering, which itself is a consequence of time passing. While Metzger's emphasis is on the time aspect of Aristotle's theory of rhetoric, I, while attempting to understand the status of the purloined letter itself, payed more attention to the role of the characters as *simulated dramatis personae*, and to Sophocles' introduction of the third actor, and in keeping with this, the focus of my argument was fundamentally historical. Lacan's idea of the signifier, Sophocles' expansion of the *dramatis personae*, Aristotle's definition of *anagnorisis*, and of *dunamis*, may indeed help to clarify the mechanism by which the purloined letter is transferred from one character to another in Poe's tale, and may even explain why Lacan was compelled to respond to this tale, but they perhaps miss the aesthetic, anthropological, and obviously visual features of the letter itself. In its refolded state, in the Minister D——'s apartment, the letter appears rather geological; it contains the newest layers of history on top while older layers are located deeper inside, and this in itself gives the letter a psychological or near-psychological impetus in the tale, somewhat akin to Jung's notion of the archetype, among other things. Lacan is more obviously interested in the letter's presence as a pure signifier, and his thoughts tend to sacrifice the historical for the purely linguistic realm, and this in turn draws a clear boundary between language and history, something that Derrida will question, but for reasons different than my own. The refolded letter has D——'s cipher on the outside, and the S—— cipher on the inside, together with the message that was intended for the Queen, and the facsimile Dupin puts in its place reduplicates the external D—— cipher, but replaces the internal message with one that is historically earlier than the original message intended for the Queen, the latter being contemporary with the time in which the story unfolds (possibly Paris of the 1830s).

Dupin quotes from Crébillon's *Atrée et Thyeste*, an example of French classicism, dating

from 1707, as Mabbott himself says (*Poe* 3:997). And indeed, this "classical" quotation will have more bearing on D——'s actions when he opens the facsimile than the contemporary message which he stole from the Queen. Lacan does not play with the historical context of the Crébillon quotation, but he does manipulate the letters, at one point substituting "destin si funeste" for the original "dessein si funeste" recorded by Poe, in order to emphasize the signifier's control over the characters rather than the presence of autonomous design implied by the original quotation, and he then plays the story of Atreus back into his transformation of Crébillon's phrase by saying that when interrogated, a signifier only says, "Eat your Dasein" (345). Lacan hints at the cannibalistic nature of language with such a phrase, and this is interesting, but he may not have had in mind the other part of the story of Atreus, that after Atreus slew three sons of Thyestes and served them to the latter at dinner, he was killed by Thyestes' fourth son, and this allows for Derrida to enter the discussion as that fourth son. Lacan's psychoanalytic and linguistic revisionism can thus be said to have a historical current operating as its hidden source, perhaps even a pre-historical one, if we consider that Atreus was the father of Agamemnon, king of Mycenae around the time of the fall of Troy, a topic that Homer and Aeschylus later pick up. The high point of this historical current is of course found in Sophocles' expansion of the *dramatis personae* which allows for earlier, mythical or semi-mythical figures to enter our thoughts in the first place. This expansion works in Lacan's favor. After all, Sophocles' testing of dramatic possibilities is the beginning of western psychology, but, as I have argued, it is also the key to understanding Poe's ratiocinative fiction.

II - Derridian Poe

"Deconstruction, it seems, is dead in literature departments today. There is still plenty of discourse being produced concerning deconstruction, but deconstruction's heyday has clearly passed. Precious few critics would identify themselves any longer as 'deconstructionists.' The term no longer dominates Modern Language Association conference panels" (Nealon 22). Such a statement begs the following question: Why am I then going to speak of Derrida's response to Lacan's "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" known as "The Purveyor of the Truth," or more specifically, as "Le Facteur de la Vérité" (first published in *Poétique* in 1975, first translated later that year to appear in *Yale French Studies*, and retranslated in 1987 as part of *The Post Card*)? The question is in part answered by the quotation which begins this section, because, while "deconstruction's heyday has clearly passed," there "is still plenty of discourse being produced concerning deconstruction." I did not mean to begin this section by imitating Derrida's fashion of writing, where he draws on quotations, bringing them back onto themselves, and so on, but it seems I did. Perhaps this is inevitable when one deals with Derrida, and his texts (both in their original and translated form). Generally speaking, deconstruction has been thought of as many things and has often been misinterpreted, particularly if assessments are being made solely on the basis of translations of Derrida's work, but certain statements still stand out more than others, like the following: "More or less explicit in the work of such marxist or leftward commentators as Hayden White, Frank Lentricchia, Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton, is the view of deconstruction as regressive, a throwback not to the Russian formalism of the teens and twenties, as was structuralist poetics, but if anything, to the dandyist aestheticism of the nineties, a displaced religion of art" (Felperin 111). Another interesting comment is actually a footnote from John M. Ellis' *Against Deconstruction*, a footnote in which the latter attempts to situate deconstruction within a larger history of theory, and says: "Another way of looking at this point is to consider deconstruction in the context of the history of skeptical thought generally. Here an odd contrast emerges; for one typically experiences skeptics as lone dissenters, disturbed and perhaps even tormented by their doubts. Deconstruc-

tion is surely quite different; it is not hesitant but cheerfully and aggressively assertive—have real skeptics ever been so self-confident" (151)? About Derrida himself, one often reads the following:

> Derrida's texts are unreadable partly because of their hybrid nature—he mixed philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, literature, classics, linguistics, and so on, a mixing which made it possible for him to avoid being bogged down in any specific conceptual structure peculiar to the terms, vocabulary, and practices of these various disciplines. As a consequence, his varied vocabulary is beyond the grasp of the average reader, but makes it possible for Derrida to be 'everywhere at once,' ungrounded in the limitation of any specific discourse. He thus 'decentres' his texts from any particular tradition or discipline, subverting the crucial terms of other traditions. (Wheeler 218)

This is a rather common complaint which arises when one reads Derrida, particularly translations of his work. However, difficulty in reading Derrida can lead to rereadings of his work in new and surprising ways, which is not necessarily what I wish to do here. De Man seems to have fallen into such a trap, of rereading Derrida, when he criticized Derrida's criticism of Rousseau:

> Derrida's criticism is of Rousseau's language and texts, not of his intention, and hence remains out of the reach of de Man's pseudo-deconstruction of Derrida. De Man thought he was analysing Rousseau's language, when he was analysing his intentions....De Man claimed that Rousseau used the language of metaphysics rhetorically and not merely declaratively, just as Derrida used it. What de Man could have asserted is that Rousseau's texts can be read rhetorically and not merely declaratively, as they usually have been....De Man postulated a pseudo-Rousseau, created by tradition, and then a real Rousseau, who is not blinded and not in need of deconstruction, for the real Rousseau is one of the enlightened authors....This sort of contradiction runs throughout de Man's work, and illustrates the gap between the American deconstructors and Derrida. (226)

I do not consciously intend to offer a deconstructionist or pseudo-deconstructionist rereading of Derrida's article, but instead, I wish to go through the major points which Derrida seems to be making, and to show in what way he engages Poe's "The Purloined Letter," and Lacan's response to that tale. At some level, it is imprecise to deal with Derrida's article in a way that attempts to bring out major points while not mentioning others that may be equally important, but my primary concern here is the impact his article has had on modern Poe scholarship, and especially the interpretation it puts forward of "The Purloined Letter."

Derrida begins his "Le Facteur de la Vérité" by introducing the theme of Hans Andersen's "The Emperor's New Clothes" in order to say the following: "Like all narratives, like all secondary elaborations, the tale veils a nudity" (418). He then elaborates on this veiling of nudity by saying that literature "can produce, can place onstage, and put forth something like the truth.

Therefore it is more powerful than the truth of which it is capable" (419). This all serves as a vague summary, or rather, allegory of what Derrida believes is happening in Poe's "The Purloined Letter" and in Lacan's response to that tale. There are, I believe, five major points being discussed by Derrida in his article, all of which are related: (a) the tendency of Lacan to neglect the "scene of writing" in this tale (b) the presence of castration and lack in Poe's tale (c) the idea of truth in/as fiction (d) the privileging of speech over writing (e) the "textual drift" of Poe's tale. I will look at them in the order that they appear.

One of the first and main points of Derrida's article, a point that ties together all of his other ideas, is Lacan's neglect of the narration of "The Purloined Letter": "...what the 'Seminar' treats is only the content of this story, what is justifiably called its history, what is recounted in the account, the internal and narrated face of the narration. Not the narration itself....And when it [Lacan's "Seminar"] sees one or two 'triads,' there is always the supplement of a square whose opening complicates calculations" (427-8). This supplementarity "of a square" is brought in by the narration of the tale and its general narrator, which Derrida argues is not as neutral and unimportant a position as Lacan thinks it to be: "The original place of the narrator on both sides of the narration, the specific status of his discourse—which is not neutral, or whose effect of neutrality is not neutral—, his interventions, and even his psychoanalytic position will never be questioned in the rest of the 'Seminar,' which will remain the analysis of the so-called 'intersubjective triads,' the triads which constitute that which is inside the recounted story,..." (429). Derrida complains that Lacan's assessment of the general narrator, as someone who "adds nothing," is not entirely correct: "So many reasons to think that the so-called general narrator always adds something, and from before the first dialogue; that he is not the general condition of possibility for the narrative, but an actor with a highly unusual status" (429-30). Derrida offers these suggestions in order to ask the following question: "To what does this neutralization of the narrator commit the 'Seminar'" (431)? Derrida answers that such a neutralization reveals serious problems "of framing" on Lacan's part:

> Lacan excludes the textual fiction from within which he has extracted the so-called general narration....There is an invisible, but structurally irreducible, frame around the narra-

> tion....The formal structure of the text is overlooked, in very classical fashion, at the very moment when, and perhaps in the extent to which, its "truth," its exemplary message, allegedly is "deciphered." The structure of fiction is reduced at the very moment when it is related to its condition of truth. This leads to poor formalism....Not to take into account this complication [the narrator's] is not a failure of "formalist" literary criticism; it is an operation of the semanticist psychoanalyst....by cutting the narrated figure itself from a fourth side in order to see only triangles, one evades perhaps a certain complication, perhaps of the Oedipal structure, which is announced in the scene of writing. (431-3)

Derrida's main complaint is that Lacan negates the general narrator's importance as a part of this fiction, "The Purloined Letter," in order to extract the two triadic scenes from the tale, scenes which I spoke of when dealing with Lacan's response. Supposedly, as a psychoanalyst, Lacan finds it necessary to do such an extraction of these "Oedipal" triads, according to Derrida. Derrida, for his own purposes, finds it necessary to keep these triadic scenes within the larger, square or rectangular structure of which the narrator is himself a part, the text itself, the fiction. Who is more correct, Lacan or Derrida? Apparently, both are equally correct, because they are analyzing the tale with different purposes in mind, Lacan with a psychoanalytic purpose, Derrida with his own purpose, possibly a non-psychoanalytic one, but this is subject to debate. As such, it would not be very fruitful on my part to approach Derrida's response from the point of view of some form of correctness, to see whether his response is more or less valid than Lacan's. I choose to be consistent; I will reintroduce the equations which I used to illustrate the triadic scenes in "The Purloined Letter" when dealing with Lacan's response, and I will try to accomodate for the narrator's role within such illustrations, to see how he might fit into all of this. When dealing with Lacan's response, I of course used my equations to explain the purloined letter's possible "nullibiety," its reduction to zero, and among those conclusions was one which implied that zero, or the idea of zero-ness, was conceived as a place in the classical milieu of Sophocles' and Aristotle's work, and not as a part of a larger chain. Lacan's error, his overemphasis on the letter's materiality, its presence as a letter, seemed to situate zero-ness as a part rather than a place. Derrida may be arguing for zero-ness as a part of something rather than a place, as well, but his argument is not brought out through an emphasis on the letter's presence, instead, it is brought out through an emphasis on the narrator as a part of the narrative, the scene of fiction. But this is all more complex than I have endeavored to describe because for Derrida the narrator is both a part, as a general

narrator, and also a place in the sense that he constitutes the narration, is the invisible yet irreducible frame of the text. Nonetheless, I reintroduce my illustrations of the triadic scenes from the analysis of Lacan's response, but this time with a conscious effort on my part to keep the narrator in mind in such illustrations.

My original equations for the two triadic scenes in Poe's tale (which I considered to be three scenes, the last being timed by Dupin's "snuff-box") were as follows: {Queen 2^- + King 1^- + Minister D $3^+ = 0$}, {Minister D 3^- + Dupin 2^- + Police $1^+ = 4^-$, Minister D 1^- + Musket man 2^+ + Dupin $3^+ = 4^+$, $4^- + 4^+ = 0$}. Once we bring in the narrator, in order to account for the entire fiction, the tale itself, and for the triadic scenes as a part of a larger narrated scene, we might get something that looks like the following: {Narrator 0 + Queen 2^- + King 1^- + Minister D $3^+ = 0$}, {Narrator 0 + Minister D 3^- + Dupin 2^- + Police $1^+ = 4^-$, Narrator 0 + Minister D 1^- + Musket man 2^+ + Dupin $3^+ = 4^+$, $4^- + 4^+ = 0$}. In such a set of equations, the presence of the narrator is acknowledged, but the reasons behind such an acknowledgment remain a mystery. If the narrator is given a value of zero, to account for his position as "an actor with a highly unusual status," as Derrida himself says, he is still not contributing anything as obvious to the text as the characters themselves, since they come in contact with the purloined letter, passing it along. Derrida of course is thinking of both the purloined letter as an entity and of the story itself as a purloined letter when he says that the narrator has more significance for the tale than Lacan thinks, who instead "neutralizes" him. Setting up the narrator as a part of the interaction which is occurring between the other characters, when the purloined letter is exchanged, may therefore not be a good idea. The sum total of those triadic sequences, which is already zero, even without an acknowledgment of the narrator's presence, may itself be bringing the narrator back into the equation, as something that in turn filters and neutralizes the story in the same way that Derrida accuses Lacan of doing. But then what is the point of accusing Lacan of such a neutralization if the narrator is also guilty of this? These are difficult and often circular questions that I am raising, but Derrida seems to invite such question-

ing by emphasizing, perhaps over-emphasizing the presence of the narrator in "The Purloined Letter."

The narrator, and the narrator as constituting the narration of the story, instead of being a part, is more probably a place from where the actions of the characters emanate and are spoken of. In this way, it is not altogether helpful to our understanding of Poe's tale to think of the narrator as an "unusual actor," as Derrida argues. The narrator may have an unusual voice, a detached presence which is not really detached and therefore all the more peculiar, but he can never really be thought of as an actor in the sense that the characters who constitute the triadic scenes can. Part of the reason for this is that the narrator, as Derrida himself implies, is not only the voice of the story but also a structural necessity for its existence. He is the glue that holds it together. But Derrida's notion of the "supplement of a square" which "complicates calculations," at least for me, does not necessarily explain the narrator's role, however ambiguous and complex that role may be. I pose the following question, which I will attempt to answer: Does the acknowledgment of the narrator's presence in "The Purloined Letter" really bring in the supplementarity of a square, bring in a fourth side, or is the narrator, for all the triadic scenes in the tale, simply located in a mirror of those triadic scenes, in the shadow of a triangle that may look like a supplemented square or parallelogram?

I suggest that the narrator and the idea of narrated fiction, which is related to the narrator's presence, is located outside of the triadic scenes which Lacan focuses on, and therefore downplayed by Lacan, as Derrida says, but the narrator still intersects those triangles with a line that joins with the most significant character in each triadic scene. This is not really supplementarity then, in the way that Derrida would like, but a mirroring of the tale's triangles, if you will. The narrator is located at a point on the mirrored triangle, or if you prefer, on the shadow of the actual triadic scene, and he thereby intersects the triangle, but not necessarily from a definable point of origin, since he is located on a point in the mirrored triangle, as opposed to the real one. In the real triadic scene, depending on which one we are looking at, we have the Queen, the King, and the Minister D—, or the Police, the Minister D—, and Dupin. Since the narrator intersects these tri-

angles, we may think, in the last triangle, of a Dupin-narrator instead of a mere Dupin, because it is Dupin who narrates the details of the triad in which he participated, and it is Dupin, not the general narrator, who ends the story by giving the source for the quotation which is placed in the facsimile of D—'s letter: "They are to be found in Crébillon's *Atrée*" (*Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe* 3:993). While in the last triadic scene we have a major participant narrating that event, Dupin, in the first triadic scene, considered by Lacan as "primal," we have the Prefect of Police, Monsieur G—, as the narrator. This is a slightly different situation than in the last triad because G— is not involved in his narrative in the same way that Dupin is in the later scene. Dupin both narrates and is a participant, while G— merely narrates, after the general narrator questions him about the robbery: "'The thief,' said G., 'is the Minister D—, who dares all things, those unbecoming as well as those becoming a man. The method of the theft was not less ingenious than bold. The document in question—a letter, to be frank—had been received by the personage robbed while alone in the royal *boudoir*'" (3:976-7). If the Prefect of Police, as the narrator of that triad, intersects the triangle to join with the most significant character, then it is with the Minister D—, who does not really have a voice in this tale, but speaks through the mouth of the police. What is most interesting about Derrida's complaint against Lacan, that the latter neutralizes the narrator, is the fact that technically, neither of the triadic scenes are being narrated by the general narrator, but by G— and Dupin, respectively. The general narrator poses a question to G— which begins a narration of the first triad, and he also poses a question soon after Dupin's narration of the last triad, but he is not the narrator of those scenes, which Derrida accuses Lacan of extracting from the tale, thereby leaving the general narrator behind. The general narrator is in a sense already behind these scenes, or rather, if his voice is indeed present in the triadic scenes, then it is amalgamated into the voice of Dupin, or of the Police, both of whom in turn speak of the Minister D—.

The question of the narrator's precise role in Poe's "The Purloined Letter" is used by Derrida to launch his own response to Lacan's article, and it is one of his major points. The next issue he focuses on is the idea of castration and lack, or rather, truth as lack, and the relation of this to Poe's tale. Now, while this point may seem less important than that of the narrator's role, it is

given an equally important spin by Derrida. Derrida speaks as follows, with reference to the path of the purloined letter:

> Castration-truth,...is that which contracts itself (stricture of the ring) in order to bring the phallus, the signifier, the letter, or the fetish back into their *oikos*, their familiar dwelling, their proper place. In this sense castration-truth is the opposite of fragmentation, the very antidote for fragmentation: that which is missing from its place has in castration a fixed, central place, freed from all substitution. Something is missing from its place, but the lack is never missing from it...The phallus, thanks to castration, always remains in its place, in the transcendental topology of which we were speaking above. In castration, the phallus is indivisible, and therefore indestructible, like the letter which *takes its place*. (441)

What is significant about Derrida's linking of castration, or rather, lack, with truth, is that he uses such an argument to look upon Lacan as someone who tries to determine "the place of the lack, the topos of that which is lacking from its place, and...[to constitute] it as a fixed center,...," and Derrida believes that the "link of Femininity and Truth is the ultimate signified of this [hermeneutic] deciphering" (441). Derrida speaks of the castrated phallus (the purloined letter) as being located in a "transcendental topology" and of how "Femininity-Truth" is the "ultimate signified." This in itself is, how can I put it, a leftover from his earlier article, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences": "...as soon as one seeks to demonstrate...that there is no transcendental or privileged signified and that the domain or play of signification henceforth has no limit, one must reject even the concept and word 'sign' itself—which is precisely what cannot be done" (395). But then, I ask, how can "Femininity-Truth" be the "ultimate signified" in Poe's tale if Derrida also implies, in yet another article, that there may be "no transcendental or privileged signified"? Derrida answers as follows: "Femininity is the Truth (of) castration, is the best figure of castration, because in the logic of the signifier it has always already been castrated; and Femininity 'leaves' something in circulation (here the letter), something detached from itself in order to have it brought back to itself, because she has 'never had it: whence truth comes out of the well, but only half-way'" (442). In this way, Derrida posits "lack" as the transcendental signified of Poe's tale, but ties lack with femininity, in order to demonstrate what he himself said in the earlier article, that a full rejection of "the concept and word 'sign'" is something that "cannot be done." The truth of the purloined letter is thus its lack, but its femininity, its relation to the Queen, makes it familiar. But this leads me to ask another question: While Derrida's discussion of lack-as-feminin-

ity in part explains the Queen's role in Poe's tale, it does not seem to explain the role of the purloined letter itself, as an object, catalyst, or entity of some sort, so what is a discussion of castration doing here in this article, apart from subtly referring to the Queen? Derrida, I am sure, would accuse me of trying something similar to what Lacan has done, trying to describe the purloined letter in some ontological sense, but this may not be altogether true, either.

Derrida, however unusual it may seem, prefers Marie Bonaparte's brief analysis of Poe's "The Purloined Letter" to Lacan's, for two reasons, because for "Bonaparte too, the castration of the woman (of the mother) is [in] the final sense, what *The Purloined Letter* means....[and because] Bonaparte is never tempted to grant Dupin the position of the analyst,...[something which Lacan's 'Seminar' seems to do, because] Dupin's lucidity comes to him from the war in which he is engaged, as he himself states at the end,..." (444-8). Derrida even quotes from Bonaparte to make things more obvious, when she says the following: "Finally, in return for a cheque of 50,000 francs, leaving to the Prefect of Police the fabulous reward, Dupin restores the woman her symbolic letter or missing penis. Thus,...we meet the equation gold = penis. The mother gives her son gold in exchange for the penis he restores" (Bonaparte 484). Bonaparte's psycho-biographical analysis of Poe's work is of course problematic because it brings in the notion of an author's intention, conscious or subconscious, but Derrida appears to shrug such an issue off when he implies that he cannot concern himself with all the implications of this, one of which happens to be "an entire conception of 'literature'" (454). One of Derrida's main points when dealing with lack and castration in Poe's tale is that the tale demonstrates "the crushing repetition compulsion," but in a more contextual fashion than Lacan implied in his article (458). Derrida says:

> Thus the letter hanging *under* the mantel of the fireplace [in "The Purloined Letter"] has its equivalent in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* [with the body stuffed head downward in a fireplace]. For us, the interest of this recurrence, and of pointing it out, is not that of an empirical enrichment, an experimental verification, the illustration of a repetitive insistence. It is structural. It inscribes *The Purloined Letter* in a texture that overflows it, to which it belongs, and within which the Seminar had effected a cursory framing or cross-section. (458-9)

Derrida is referring to repetition as being "structural" and not only thematic in Lacan's sense, and this comment foreshadows Derrida's later statement, when he once again accuses Lacan's "Seminar" of "neutralizing" the narrator and possibly Dupin (who seems doubled at times, therefore

interfering with the triangularity of the main scenes). Derrida argues that "the Seminar does everything necessary in order to avoid what 'Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis' calls 'uncontrollable anxiety.' The analysand's anxiety, of course:..." (460-1). Thus, repetition compulsion in Poe's tale, which may be a repetition of castration and lack, via the purloined letter's path, is for Derrida structural, and hence closer in effect to an anxiety disorder, and is therefore something which Lacan avoids, seeing the repetition only in the duplication of the triadic scenes, and therefore keeping it closer to a textbook case of repetition compulsion. It may be possible, I should add, that for Derrida, repetition compulsion is indistinguishable from anxiety disorder, but I will not concern myself with this here.

What is most interesting about Derrida's criticism of Lacan's response to "The Purloined Letter," when dealing with castration, lack, and Bonaparte's response to the tale, is precisely this reference to a possibly "structural" repetition compulsion, which may be intended to undermine Lacan's own reading of this compulsion, a reading that seems narrower in scope. Derrida has a problem with Lacan's fixation on the purloined letter as a material entity, and believes that there is an "ideality of the signifier" in Lacan's fixation (464). He says:

> The idealism lodged within it is not a theoretical position of the analyst; it is a structural effect of *signification* in general, to whatever transformations or adjustments one subjects the space of *semiosis*. One can understand that Lacan finds this "materiality" "odd" [*"singulière"*] [of the letter]: he retains only its ideality. He considers the letter only at the point at which it is determined (no matter what he says) by its content of meaning, by the ideality of the message that it "vehiculates,".... (464)

Derrida refers to the ideality of the letter which Lacan sees as a "structural effect" of signification, in the same way that he referred to the repetition compulsion which Lacan also saw as being possibly structural in origin, so I thus ask the following question: Could it be possible that the repetition compulsion, or anxiety disorder, which Derrida thinks is present in Poe's tale, thematically, contextually, and otherwise, is also an ideality that has its origins in structural effects of signification, like the ideality of the letter, which not only "vehiculates" the ideality of its message but also the ideality of repetition compulsion? If this is correct, then it is not so much the case that repetition compulsion or anxiety disorder is the issue in Poe's story, but rather, cases of ideality must be repeated in order to become and remain truly ideal, such as the purloined letter's closed circuit in

this particular tale. Derrida would possibly find it difficult to digest such a statement, that there is more ideality than anxiety in Poe's tale, but he might agree with the potential for ideality to spring forth from repetition, as seen in *La Voix et le phénomène (Speech and Phenomena)*, where he asserts: "But this ideality, which is but another name for the permanence of the same and the possibility of its repetition, *does not exist* in the world, and it does not come from another world. It depends entirely on the possibility of acts of repetition. It is constituted by repetition. Its 'being' is only measured by the power of repetition…" (qtd. in Baker 56). I am however skeptical of Derrida's ability to accept ideality as fulfilling itself in repetitive maneuvers, particularly because in *Glas* he substitutes *différance* for ideality, arguing that the former is "always already" there: "The bloody detachment is also—repetition—delegation, mandate, delay, relay. Adherence. The detached remains stuck by that, by the glue of difference, by the a. The a of gl agglutinates the detached differences. The scaffold of the A is gluey…" (qtd. in Baker 65). Derrida criticizes Lacan for being fixated with the letter's materiality and with the triadic scenes, playing this off against the castration and lack which Bonaparte reads into the tale, and against his own reading of the narrator as an actor with an unusual status, but what is more significant here, it seems to me, is that a double reading of Poe's tale, as having both ideality (for Lacan) and *différance* (for Derrida), becomes a definition of literature per se, a concept which Derrida implied he had no time to concern himself with.

The third issue which Derrida touches upon is, generally speaking, an issue that is tied to his other points as well: it is the issue of truth in/as fiction, or rather, the idea of truth which Heidegger discloses in the word *aletheia* (Derrida 467). Clark elaborates on this point and Derrida's relationship with it as follows:

> *Mimesis* thus considered is in accordance with a notion of truth as [*aletheia*], uncoveredness, the simple appearing of what is present in its appearance. In fact, as Heidegger demonstrates, this simplicity is nothing of the kind. Secondly, Derrida refers to the more familiar sense of *mimesis* as imitation. In so far as what is involved in this notion is the imitation or *re*-presentation of something already in some way apparent this traditional sense of *mimesis* is dependent on the sense of *mimesis* as apparentness. (1005)

In "Le Facteur de la Vérité" Derrida assesses this linking of truth-mimesis and the often representational attributes given to such an idea, implying that truth, for Lacan and others, rather than

merely representing and/or being represented, even declares itself through the very structure of fiction, however evasive its maneuvers (of truth). His elaboration on the topic seems a three-pronged rereading and criticism of Poe, Lacan's response to Poe, but also, quite possibly, of Heidegger's notion of truth-*aletheia*:

> ...[for Lacan] it does not follow that truth is a fiction, but that through fiction truth properly declares itself. Fiction manifests the truth: the manifestation that illustrates itself through evasion. *Dichtung* (poetic saying or fiction, this is both Goethe's and Freud's expression: just as for Heidegger, the issue is one of literary fiction as *Dichtung*) is the manifestation of the truth, its being-declared:...Truth governs the fictional element of its manifestation, which permits it to be or to become what it is, to declare itself. Truth governs this element from its origin or its telos, which finally coordinates this concept of literary fiction with a highly classical interpretation of *mimesis*: a detour toward the truth, more truth in the fictive representation than in reality, increased fidelity, "superior realism." (467-8)

What is significant about Derrida's analysis is that it attempts, in relation to Poe's tale, Lacan's response, and Heidegger's notion of truth, to bring about a new definition of mimesis, and truth as mimesis. Derrida's distrust of the linkage between a "concept of literary fiction" and a "classical interpretation of *mimesis*" works its way into his reading of Poe and Lacan, but it also makes evident another point, that in his response to such writers, Derrida is once again reworking certain aspects of Heidegger's theory, a theory that is also reworked by Gadamer in *Truth and Method*, but for different reasons. The difference between these reworkings is not only what distinguishes Derrida's work from Gadamer's, but more fundamentally, it is the difference upon which this study operates its own argument, eventually arriving at period style analysis as a way to incorporate both Lacan's and Derrida's contributions to Poe scholarship within the framework of a larger literary-historical analysis, and hence, bringing about an emphasis on the Gadamerian notion of "situatedness," and also, more generally, on the idea of "dialogue, [which] according to Gadamer, is made possible by the condition of a [historically situated] preunderstanding (Vorverständnis) on the part of the participants. This preunderstanding extends not only to the participants' expectations in regard to each other's standpoint but also to an understanding of and concern with the subject matter (Sache) of the discourse" (qtd. in Hoy 77). Derrida's perhaps over-radicalization of certain Heideggerian ideas leads to a distrust of Gadamer's notion of dialogue, or more broadly, of dialectical thinking, because of another point which Derrida later comes to in his analysis of

Lacan's response to Poe, the "traditional priority of speech over writing [which] represents a metaphysical bias that he attributes to the Platonism of the modern world-historical situation" (qtd. in Hoy 79). Derrida himself puts the question as follows: "But once again, why would speech be the privileged element of this truth declared *as* fiction, in the mode or structure of fiction, of verified fiction, of what Gide calls 'superior realism'" (Derrida 468)? This leads me to ask further questions about how Derrida might respond to Gadamer's own reworking of Heidegger's ideas, and I offer Hoy's own thoughts, which are perceptive on this matter: "Since Gadamer models his theory of understanding not only on the early Heidegger but also on Plato's dialogues, one must ask whether Derrida's criticism of the 'Platonic' priority of speech would also be a criticism of Gadamer's use of dialogue as a hermeneutic paradigm. Does Derrida's analysis show Gadamer's notion to be merely a metaphor, and an inappropriate one for written texts" (79)?

Derrida's particular reading of Lacan's response, and his reading of Poe's tale as a four-sided structure, is fairly obvious evidence for his reworking of Heideggerian ideas. In Clark's article, this reworking is seen in relation to other texts. In contrast to Heidegger's rather "ontological" reading of language in the work of Georg Trakl, Derrida's reading of Mallarmé's *Mimique* in "The Double Session" tends "to disrupt the Heideggerian account of poetic language in relation to the ontico-ontological difference. In particular, the primary sense of *mimesis* (the *appearing* of the appearance) must lose the priority which Heidegger accords to it [a call to Being]" (1015-6). Clark elaborates by saying that the "displacement which Derrida brings to the structure of *appearing* (*mimesis*, sense one) as a movement of (self-)effacement can be followed in terms of the recurrent question of the *stage*. This theatrical model neatly raises the question of the invisible medium through which a presentation becomes apparent. If the geometry of the stage is a square, everything hinges on the fourth, open or 'missing' side. This is the side that does not appear:..." (1016). This is also the side which Derrida tends to read into Poe's "The Purloined Letter," thereby questioning Lacan's reading of the tale. In the case of Mallarmé's *Mimique*, Clark speaks:

> ...the stage is a particularly strange set-up, since it is Pierrot himself. However the staging, far from becoming the invisible fourth side of a scene of representation, has become here itself *the only occupant* of the stage. What might seem to be simply *presence* (*mimesis* sense one) [classical mimesis] here "represents" itself. Moreover what is represented and referred back to does not

> pre-exist Pierrot's mime, the act of referral. By the same token there is no representation, no correspondence between some pre-existent theme and its signification. Signification, without anchoring, envelops the totality of what seems to take place even as it produces it. (1016)

This second notion of mimesis, if we can call it that, is then best described as a type of *originary mimicry*, but this is problematic, because this second mimesis is still derivative of the first, classical one. Derrida reads *Mimique* as scrambling "the distinction between presentation and representation" and this "questions Heidegger's valorisation of the former against the latter" (1017-8). Clark summarizes as follows: "In short, the Heideggerian *gathering* of the extases of time towards the presence of the present [Being] must give way to a movement or irreducible temporalization and to paradoxically unanticipated *after*-effects [for Derrida]" (1017). Such "*after*-effects" are brought by Derrida into his reading of Poe and Lacan, but more generally, this is a result of his radicalization of certain Heideggerian ideas. Hoy says that "Derrida's work represents a brilliant rethinking not so much of Heidegger's earlier thinking—the fundamental ontology and hermeneutic phenomenology influencing Gadamer—but of Heidegger's later, antimetaphysical writings" (78). Nonetheless, I believe that Gadamer's and Derrida's reworking of Heidegger's ideas, and their respective positions in such a debate, have by default been brought into a discussion of Lacan's and Derrida's responses to Poe, that is taking place here in the study. This once again brings up the Gadamerian ideas of situatedness and dialogue, the latter of which Derrida may be suspicious because of its Platonic origin. However, such suspicion would unfairly negate the nuances of Gadamer's own thought, which allows for a linking of Lacan, Derrida, and period style analysis in the first place, through a meta-interpretive endeavor such as I am engaging in. Gadamer's idea of dialogue may indeed be similar to Plato's, but it does not presuppose Plato's doctrine of ideas or his notion of truth, and similarly, even though it tends toward a dialectical way of thinking, it does not collapse into Hegelianism, taking the notion of *Geist* and grounding it in subjectivity (qtd. in Palmer 165-6). Derrida's suspicions are welcome, but if anything, Gadamer comes closer to Aristotle's notion of *phronesis* (practical wisdom), the recognition of man's finitude and historicity, than to the Platonic *episteme* or the Hegelian closure of self-consciousness, which translates historical experience into a false absolute (qtd. in Hoy 60).

The fourth major issue which Derrida focuses on in "Le Facteur de la Vérité," apart from the role of the narrator, the presence of castration-lack, and the idea of truth in/as fiction, is, as mentioned when dealing with the last point, the privileging of speech over writing, which Derrida elsewhere calls "phonocentrism," one characteristic of the logocentric way of thinking (qtd. in Selden 171). Derrida argues that when "Lacan recalls 'the passion for unveiling which has one object: the truth' and recalls that the analyst 'above all remains the master of the truth,' it is always in order to link the truth to the power of speech" (469). But things are more complex for Derrida than a mere linking of speech with truth. He speaks later as follows:

> The truth, which is what must be refound [*retrouvé*], therefore is not an object beyond the subject, is not the adequation of speech to an object, but the adequation of full speech to itself, its proper authenticity, the conformity of its act to its original essence....Speech, here, is not full of something beyond itself which would be its object: but this is why all the more and all the better, it is full of itself, of its presence, its essence....Materiality, the sensory and repetitive side of the recording, the paper letter, drawings in ink, can be divided or multiplied, destroyed or set adrift (since authentic originality is always already lost in them). The letter itself, in the Lacanian sense, as the site of the signifier and symbol of a sworn faith, and therefore of a true full and present speech, has as its property, its "singular," "odd" property in effect, "not to admit partition." (470-3)

What am I to make of these comments? Derrida argues that Lacan equates truth with speech, and hence, commits a phonocentric error. Derrida cautions that truth is not "the adequation of speech to an object" but rather, "the adequation of full speech to itself." In this way, speech, more generally the use of language, becomes something which travels in a circular path, coming back to itself, to what it really refers to, itself. Derrida then interjects that "materiality," "the paper letter," "the sensory and repetitive side of the recording" of speech, can be destroyed or thrown out of its path, while "the letter itself, in the Lacanian sense," is a "full and present speech." The comment about the letter in a Lacanian sense probably refers to the letter in "ideality," to use a word mentioned earlier. In other words, Derrida may be implying that Lacan's greatest error is that he equates the purloined letter in Poe's tale with the idea, notion, or presence of actual speech, or at least views it as a symbol of speech in the tale. But then, I have to ask, how does Derrida view the purloined letter? Most probably, by saying that truth is not the "adequation of speech to an object," he is also implying that the purloined letter is not the vehicle of truth in Poe's tale, but only something that might look like truth (externally) because it is an object that some of us may equate with speech,

which may be an error on our part. More importantly, Derrida says that speech is only "full of itself," which in turn implies that speech is not something embodied in or to be equated with the purloined letter in Poe's story. But this is where the real confusion of Derrida's argument sets in. Is speech, therefore, always already there in Poe's "The Purloined Letter," is it never there, and either way, does all of this downplay both the purloined letter's role and material presence in the tale, since truth does not necessarily mean a linking of speech with object? Derrida elaborates on the complexity of his notion of speech as follows: "But if this speech is nonetheless accessible, it is because no true speech is only the subject's speech, since it is always toward grounding it in the mediation of another subject that it operates, and that thereby it is open to the chain without end—certainly not indefinite, since it closes itself again—of the speeches in which the dialectic of recognition is concretely realized in the human community" (475).

According to Derrida, then, if speech is present in Poe's tale, it is never "only the subject's speech," since it always operates "in the mediation of another subject." Derrida's notion of speech may then be synonymous, or near-synonymous, with the notion of intertext, because speech and other phenomena are mediated through the other, or more generally, through otherness. In this way, the question I posed earlier, as to whether or not speech is present in Poe's tale, via the purloined letter, is irrelevant. If we stick to Derrida's elaboration on speech, it is always sort-of-present, but only sort-of because of its grounding in another subject, and not in the subject of what that speech may be speaking of, the latter being an example of ideal and true speech, which may be impossible in Derrida's context of definitions, but may be possible in Lacan's context of psychoanalysis, where certain scenes in Poe's tale may be more "primal" than others. On a broader note, Derrida's thoughts on speech, that it only reveals its own presence, that it is grounded in another's subject, and so on, is intended to destabilize the notions of perception, representation, and allusion, which we encounter when dealing with a text, particularly Poe's "The Purloined Letter." Among various comments about Derrida, we find the following: "Perception is not representational, but interpretive; we cannot be aware of pure immediacy, for awareness involves differentiation, terms, relations, and therefore cannot be immediate. All perception is the recognition of

patterns and relationships, not the recognition or reception of substance or pure simples, atoms, or sensations. Consequently, everything is, for Derrida, relationship and difference" (Wheeler 131). Derrida bases perception on "relationship and difference," and the distinction between speech and the object of representation, which he argues for while looking at Lacan's response to Poe's tale, seems to be the foundation for such an idea of perception, or rather, of how perception operates. The division between speech and object becomes the basis for the difference on which relationships between the two can be constructed. This is not all that problematic to accept, but what is problematic is that such a view of perception, speech, object, etc., does not fully situate the role of the purloined letter in Poe's story. One reason why this may be so is because Derrida views the entire story as a purloined letter, as belonging to a larger trilogy of detective tales, and so on, but perhaps for this same reason, the purloined letter in "The Purloined Letter" gets downplayed, because speech, that is to say, purloined letters, are no longer tied to objects, the truth of their speech, that is to say, in this case, the purloined letter which literally gets passed around. I find this surprising, that a nuanced reader like Derrida, while exposing Poe's tale as a purloined letter, does not take into account the content of that letter. Or perhaps he thinks that its content is hidden, as is the content of the story's purloined letter, which, by the way, is fictional. The real purloined letter, "The Purloined Letter," makes its content, its purloined letter, and the role of that letter, rather obvious. The Prefect of Police states that possession of the purloined letter "gives the holder of the document an ascendancy over the illustrious personage whose honor and peace are so jeopardized" (*Poe* 3:976). Dupin, more profoundly, says that the letter's possession is as important as its "susceptibility of being produced at a moment's notice...That is to say, of being *destroyed*" (3:978). Derrida says that speech, rather than producing an object, only produces itself, so that presence, and for that matter, perception of objects, is hardly immediate. The only thing which becomes immediate is speech, but the Minister D— is able to produce the letter immediately, "at a moments notice," and Dupin spots it immediately in D—'s apartment, so I ask, if only speech is immediate, and Dupin and D— seem to do things immediately, or near-immediately, should not the letter have been left behind? On the contrary, the letter follows them around, or they follow it,

but either way, things do not seem to lag behind, something I would expect to find if the truth of an object's representation was just another lie, another purloined letter. The letter is purloined, but it is still a letter per se, and may be an allegory of speech in Poe's world of words. Derrida, it seems, by drawing a division between speech and objects of representation, is reduplicating the actions of the Pierrot who enacted the tickling of his wife to death in Mallarmé's *Mimique*, that is to say, "miming the actions of both murderer and victim in turn" (Clark 1014).

The fifth and final point I want to touch upon in Derrida's article is his idea that in Poe's "The Purloined Letter" there is "a textual drift of which the Seminar [Lacan's] takes not the slightest account" (483). Needless to say, such an idea is related to Derrida's first and main point, that Lacan does not seem to acknowledge the narrator's presence and importance in Poe's tale, and the invisible framing which goes along with this, but this last point is, it seems to me, more subtle and complex. Derrida begins this phase of his discussion by focusing on the introductory paragraph of "The Purloined Letter" which he believes is neglected by Lacan's "Seminar," in which the analysis "begins only after the entry of the Prefect of the Parisian police" (484). Derrida, focusing on the first paragraph, argues two points. First, he says: "Everything begins 'in' a library: in books, writings, references. Therefore nothing begins. Only a drifting or disorientation from which one does not emerge" (484). Secondly, he says: "Additionally, an explicit reference is made in the direction of two other narratives onto which 'this one' is grafted. The 'analogy' between the three accounts is the milieu of *The Purloined Letter*. The independence of this tale, as presumed by the Seminar, is therefore the effect of an ablation, even if one takes the tale in its totality, with its narrator and his narration" (484). Derrida is linking his second point to the following phrase, uttered by the general narrator in the first paragraph of Poe's tale: "For myself, however, I was mentally discussing certain topics which had formed matter for conversation between us at an earlier period of the evening; I mean the affair of the Rue Morgue, and the mystery attending the murder of Marie Rogêt" (3:974). Derrida outlines these points so as to make the following conclusion:

> Everything "begins," then, by obscuring this beginning in the "silence," "smoke," and "dark" of this library. The casual observer sees only the smoking meerschaum: a literary decor in sum, the ornamental frame of a narrative. On this border, which is negligible for the hermeneut interested in the center of the picture and in what is within the representation, one could

> already read that all of this was an affair of writing, and of writing adrift, in a place of writing open without end to its grafting onto other writings,...Fortuitous notations, curling eddies of smoke, contingencies of framing? (484-5)

The "textual drift" which Derrida believes is present in Poe's tale is somehow illustrated by Dupin's "smoking meerschaum," but also by the fact that there are obvious references to other texts in this text, "The Purloined Letter," where, as Derrida says, everything "begins in a library." It is interesting that Derrida finds it necessary to base his argument for textual drift on the librariness, if I can use such a term, of Poe's tale. Joseph N. Riddell, in his "The 'Crypt' of Edgar Poe," while analyzing "The Fall of the House of Usher," offers the "purest instance of a deconstructionist reading of a major Poe work aside from 'The Purloined Letter'...[and he] tries to justify Poe as a deconstructionist *avant la lettre,...*" (qtd. in Hirsch 414). Among Riddell's points is his emphasis on the librariness of Usher's manor, and he speaks as follows: "The library reduplicates the 'specious totality' and 'wild inconsistency' of the 'house'—an outside of disrelated stones repeated in an inside that is a specious totality of texts. Moreover, the library is not only a central room, but another closure that stands outside or over the central tomb. The texts that stand for one idea signify its absence. They are signs of death" (Riddell 133). What is of interest here is the fact that deconstructionist readings of Poe's work, no matter how different the text or topic, feel the need at some point in the analysis to interpret the tales as allegories of literature, something which should already be obvious and only natural, not requiring allegorization, or perhaps, as Dupin says, "the mystery is a little *too* plain,...A little *too* self-evident" (3:975).

According to Derrida, the introductory paragraph of Poe's "The Purloined Letter" is a pseudo-beginning, and not a real one, because everything is obscured in the smoke, the darkness, and the references to other texts, which begin elsewhere, and so on. And he argues that the "hermeneut" would find this negligible, because the meaning/centre of the tale is more important. By looking at the first paragraph, according to Derrida, we will already know what this tale is about, that it is about writing, the act of writing, the nature of writing, etc. But Derrida's emphasis on this paragraph, as a pseudo-beginning, as an example of the "textual drift" of Poe's tale, seems to over-emphasize the importance of that paragraph, in a similar fashion as the hermeneut would

over-emphasize the importance of the central meaning of the tale. I therefore ask the following question: Is it not possible that the introductory paragraph is as equally significant for our understanding of this story as the other portions of the text, such as the triadic scenes, the purloined letter's presence, and the dénouement in which Dupin leaves a facsimile of the letter at D—'s place? Derrida is, of course, using the introductory paragraph as an example of the tale's textual drift, its shifting, because the paragraph happens to lend itself well to such an interpretation. There is indeed darkness, smoke, and a solemn obscurity in that first paragraph, but my greatest worry is that Derrida has interpreted the atmosphere of the introduction as a structural reality of the tale, where darkness and smoke literally become the foundations of this text, or of any text, for that matter:

> At Paris, just after dark one gusty evening in the autumn of 18—, I was enjoying the twofold luxury of meditation and a meerschaum, in company with my friend C. Auguste Dupin, in his little back library, or book-closet, *au troisième, No. 33, Rue Dunôt, Faubourg St. Germain*. For one hour at least we had maintained a profound silence; while each, to any casual observer, might have seemed intently and exclusively occupied with the curling eddies of smoke that oppressed the atmosphere of the chamber. (*Poe* 3:974)

The darkness and obscurity give atmosphere to that first paragraph, and set the tone for the rest of the tale. One might say that the atmosphere is metaphoric of things to come, and one may thus interpret that atmosphere as a metaphoric cipher, a key or preamble to the rest of the text, to a full understanding of it, but this all seems more probable than substituting atmosphere for structural reality, the latter of which is, according to Derrida, a "textual drift" via Dupin's "smoking meerschaum," and other things. Riddell, in his deconstructionist reading of "The Fall of the House of Usher," also seems to confuse form with content in the way that Derrida does: "...for Riddell, the collapse of the metaphorical decaying house that also symbolizes a decaying family is equivalent to the collapse of the story. But the 'story' does not 'collapse' the way the house does. It remains a viable 'structure' that English speakers continue to read and make sense of" (qtd. in Hirsch 415). But there is a deeper reason why Derrida focuses so much on the first paragraph as an example of the tale's textual drift, and a deeper reason why he focused on Bonaparte's reading of castration and lack into this tale, earlier on. Derrida keeps destabilizing the content and frame of this story so as to provide a general critique of Lacan's conclusion to his own seminar, that a letter arrives at its

destination, irrespective of its message or lack of message. Derrida's critique is placed soon after a discussion of the introductory paragraph of "The Purloined Letter" and of its proof of textual drift: "...a letter does *not always* arrive at its destination, and from the moment that this possibility belongs to its structure one can say that it never truly arrives, that when it does arrive its capacity not to arrive torments it with an internal drifting" (489). And Derrida further argues, near the end of his article, that what is responsible for this drifting is "the squaring of this scene of writing, [in which] perhaps there is...no possible enclosure for an analytic situation" (493-4). What is amusing here is that Derrida speaks of Poe's tale as perhaps offering no "enclosure for an analytic situation" near the end of his article. And I have to ask: If a "letter does *not always* arrive at its destination," as Derrida believes, then where does it remain, in the hands of those who forgot to send it, or in the minds of those who forgot to write it, or perhaps it really did arrive, and some preferred to hide it away, some merely to hide it, others to further delay and enjoy its inevitable arrival? I answer this question by offering the following section of discussion from "The Purloined Letter," in which the general narrator and the Prefect of Police speak. I offer this answer as an allegory of Derrida's reading of Poe:

> "Sometimes the top of a table, or other similarly arranged piece of furniture, is removed by the person wishing to conceal an article; then the leg is excavated, the article deposited within the cavity, and the top replaced. The bottoms and tops of bedposts are employed in this way."
>
> "But could not the cavity be detected by sounding?" [the narrator] asked.
>
> "By no means, if, when the article is deposited, a sufficient wadding of cotton be placed around it. Besides, in our case, we were obliged to proceed without noise." (*Poe* 3:979)

Gadamer, suggesting "the hermeneutical priority of the question" (*Truth and Method* 325), counters both Lacan's faith in the letter's presence and Derrida's skepticism of its arrival, saying:

> Letters,...are an interesting transitional phenomena: a kind of written conversation that, as it were, stretches out the movement of talking at cross purposes before seeing each other's point....The time lapse between sending a letter and receiving an answer is not just an external factor, but gives to this form of communication its proper nature as a particular form of writing. So we note that the speeding-up of the post has not led to a heightening of this form of communication but, on the contrary, to a decline in the art of letter-writing. (332)

III - Period Style

There is a website based in the town of Greding, Germany, called *Kunst & Antiquitäten (Art and Antiques)*, where period style furniture is displayed in virtual rooms, including such categories as Baroque, Dresden Baroque, Rococo, Louis-Seize, Empire, Vienna Biedermeier, and Biedermeier. It is located at <http://www.ehrl.de/index.html>, and the furniture, I should add, is on display in real rooms in the Baroque castle at Greding, but what is most interesting is the gesture itself, through which these different styles, divided by separate rooms, both virtual and real, resemble endeavors in literary periodization. And depending on how the styles are grouped, categorized, and placed into the rooms, the concept of periodization will itself acquire a definition in keeping with the unfolding situation. It is therefore important, before going on to speak of a Biedermeier milieu, to touch briefly upon more structural issues, to speak of the various ways in which period style analysis has itself been defined.

Patrick Brady, in *Rococo Style Versus Enlightenment Novel*, discusses the different types of such analysis. The first type mentioned is "diachronically closed," a system where "historical continuity is represented in period style concepts by the succession of clearly distinguishable and definable fragments....This is the position adopted by René Wellek, Henri Peyre, Paul van Tieghem, Morse Peckham" (19-20). René Wellek says that Romanticism is "the great endeavor to overcome the split between subject and object, the self and the world, the conscious and the unconscious. This is the central creed of the great Romantic poets in England, Germany, and France. It is a closely coherent body of thought and feeling" (132). Henry Remak holds similar, diachronically closed views, writing in "West-European Romanticism: Definition and Scope" that "the evidence pointing to the existence in Western Europe of a widespread, distinct and fairly simultaneous pattern of thought, attitudes and beliefs associated with the connotation 'Romanticism' is over-whelming..." (qtd. in Wellek 132). In a later work, Remak implies the existence of a unified Romanticism through the importance representative writers placed on the novellesque: "The best definition of the core of the novellesque is still, after a century and a half, Goethe's 'eine

sich ereignete unerhörte Begebenheit' (the 'one authentic unheard-of event')....The audience [of the novellesque], originally entirely aristocratic (*Decamerone*),...grows more and more bourgeois [as in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Die Serapionsbrüder*] but retains its sophistication" (Remak 24). Brady says, using the example of the term "classicism," that a "profusion of meanings [a classic, the classics, classicism, neoclassicism, etc.] would appear to constitute a serious objection to the argument in favour of diachronically closed definition" (Brady 20). The second type of analysis he mentions is "synchronically closed and unrelational...an atomistic position which is inevitably undisciplinary. This is the position adopted by Paul Valéry, Arthur Lovejoy, Kurt Wais, Rémy Saisselin; it is also reflected to some extent even in the writings of such scholars as R. A. Sayce, Jean Hagstrum, and others" (20-1). Such a view is best represented by Rémy Saisselin, who says: "The use of terms such as mannerist, baroque, rococo, neo-classic veils the richness and diversity of the arts of the periods they refer to" (qtd. in Brady 21). Brady adds that "a predominantly periodic conception of styles leads Saisselin to claim that Fragonard cannot be a rococo painter because he worked at the time of the neo-classic revival [and so on] (assumption: all the works of any given period must belong to the same style)" (21). The third type of analysis mentioned is "diachronically open": "According to radical philosophical relativism, period style concepts are *open*: they are not subject to diachronically closed definition—and this situation is both natural (given the nature of language) and fraught with a vagueness which is beneficial. Such is Morris Weitz's interpretation and application of Wittgenstein" (22). Brady believes that Weitz views vagueness in terminology as beneficial because he has misinterpreted Wittgenstein's analysis of language (where philosophical problems are semantic in origin), "applying diachronically the Wittgensteinian notion of [synchronically] 'open' concepts (i.e., concepts applied to a number of things on the basis not of the sharing of necessary and sufficient criteria but of 'families' of related features),..." (22).

Brady has proposed his own idea: "...period style terms are *partly closed* and *partly open*: such terms are, *pace* Weitz, diachronically closed...—vagueness is not beneficial but avoidable and to be avoided; and they are, *pace* Saisselin, synchronically 'open' or relational" (23). In keeping with the issue of period style analysis, and period style concepts, Brady also cautions against the

"synaesthetic fallacy," of making analogies between the various arts (painting, music, sculpture, architecture, literature, etc.) without modifying superficial and simplistic analogies into something more thoroughly defined, that takes into account the different forms and modes of art, and not merely the thematic content (28-32). We are also cautioned against the "anti-synaesthetic fallacy," whereby it is thought that all comparisons between the arts are useless and invalid, and Brady believes that this latter mode of thinking is more widespread, and thus more negative (28). Finally, Brady argues for "pluralistic" rather than "monolithic" conceptions of period style, whereby several styles and trends may be present in one period, but the dominant style will be used as a general indicator or marker for the period; he prefers this to monolithic conceptions, as exercised by Helmut Hatzfeld and Roger Laufer, who, to use their example, view the entire eighteenth century as Rococo and subsequently attempt to make all of the works looked at into examples of the Rococo (qtd. in Brady 29-30).

In his article, "Style," Meyer Schapiro also touches upon the complexities involved in periodization, speaking of how most periodizers use a combination of methods of analysis (cyclical, polar, evolutionary, ideological, psychological, sociological, etc.) but that one method usually dominates the others, and one of his major complaints is directed at the ideological approach: "the attempts to derive style from thought are often too vague to yield more than suggestive *aperçus*; the method breeds analogical speculations which do not hold up under detailed critical study" (qtd. in Park 18). William Park, however, believes that there "is something naive about Schapiro's skepticism, for if carried further, if applied with greater rigor, it causes not only *aperçus* and analogies but also all correspondences of any kind to break down and disintegrate" (18). Park tells us to keep in mind John Henry Newman's attempt to "counter Humean skepticism" by raising the issue of "probability": "According to Newman, in assenting to hypotheses of any kind—scientific, social, moral, or theological—the mind cannot rely on mathematical proofs, rather it depends on interlocking and interrelated probabilities that reinforce one another to such a degree that one can believe or assent to the hypothesis as certain" (18-9). Park also mentions Arnold Hauser, and the comment is relevant: "In art history, [the latter] has defended the theory of period style on similar

grounds. According to him, style cannot be derived literally from the works that carry it, nor is it ever as accessible as the feelings and conceptions aroused by the particular work. Those who think it should be he calls 'positivists.' Rather style is like a musical theme of which only the variations are known, yet it is a *fact* because the artist is always in a state of greater or lesser tension with it" (19).

Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, however unusual it may seem, also offers insights into the complexity of doing period style analysis, through the meta-hermeneutic analysis that is taking place. There are several points made in this work, all of which need not be mentioned here, but I do wish to touch upon some aspects of the argument. One point which crops up throughout the work, and which has relevance for period style analysis, is that of history, or rather, historicality. It is interesting that Gadamer speaks of the issue of history when dealing with the idea of literature, tying the two together:

> Only the development of historical consciousness changes this living unity of world literature from the immediacy of its normative claim as a unity into a question of literary history. But this is a process that is unfinished and perhaps never can be finished. It was Goethe who first formulated the idea of 'world literature' in the German language, but for Goethe it was still quite automatic to use such an idea in a normative sense. It has not died out even today, for we still say that a work of lasting importance belongs to world literature....It is...the historical mode of being of literature that makes it possible for something to belong to world literature....The mode of being of literature has something unique and incomparable about it. It presents a specific problem of translation to the understanding....The written word and what partakes of it—literature—is the intelligibility of mind transferred to the most alien medium. (143-5)

The point to keep in mind here is that the concept of world literature is itself only possible because literature is historically grounded, or in other words, arises from historical contexts. But the relationship between literature and history is much more complex than we may think, primarily because the relationship is in a state of continuous transformation, because of the changing definition of the parameters of literature (what literature is, etc.) and also, more significantly, because of the changing definition of history, which in turn influences the definition of literature. Gadamer points out the Romantic concept of history and its presuppositions (universal history, continuity in history, unity of history, etc.), implying the necessity for a redefinition of history:

> There are many ways of conceiving history in terms of a criterion that lies beyond it. Wilhelm von Humboldt's classicism sees history as the loss and decline of the perfection of Greek life.

> The gnostic theology of history of Goethe's time, the influence of which on the young Ranke has been recently demonstrated, conceives the future as the re-establishment of a lost perfection of some primal time. Hegel reconciled the aesthetic exemplariness of classical antiquity with the self-confidence of the present, by describing the art religion of the Greeks as a form of the spirit that had been superseded and proclaiming, in the philosophical self-consciousness of freedom, the perfect fulfillment of history in the present. All these are ways of conceiving history that invoke a criterion that remains outside history. (177)

But there is something even more fundamental at work in any definition of history, and that is illustrated by Ranke's own words: "Freedom is combined with power" (qtd. in Gadamer 181). Not only is such a statement relevant to the historian and to the concept of history, but it also works its way into interpretations of literary texts, as when Jon Thompson says that Dupin's omniscience, his aloofness, is the result of the fact that Poe's idea of the superman is different than Nietzsche's, and so on (Thompson 49). The implications of such a statement are far reaching, extending not only to a reader's interpretation of Dupin as a character, or to a more general interpretation of Poe's oeuvre, but also to an entire conception of literature and history, where ideas of freedom and power hold the entire framework together. Gadamer elaborates on the implications of the Romantic definition of history, as seen in Ranke's linking of freedom with power:

> The use of the category of power now makes it possible to think of continuity in history as a primary given. Power is real always only as an interplay of powers, and history is this interplay of power that produces a continuity. Both Ranke and Droysen say in this connection that history is a 'growing aggregate,' in order to reject all claim to an a priori construction of world history, and they consider this view based wholly on experience....That universal history is a growing aggregate means that it is a whole—though an unfinished one. But this is by no means obvious....If the reality of history is conceived as an inter-play of forces, this concept is obviously not enough to make its unity necessary. What guided Herder and Humboldt, the ideal of the rich variety of the manifestations of human life, does not ground, as such, any true unity. There must be something that emerges in the continuity of events as a goal giving an orientation to the whole. In fact, the place that is occupied in the eschatologies of the philosophy of history, both of religious origin and in their secularised versions, is here empty. (182-3)

It is this lack of goal in a supposedly unified and growing history which leads Gadamer to question the Romantic definition of history, but this does not mean that Gadamer is denying the presence of history, or rather, the importance of such an idea. Dealing with such issues, Gadamer mentions Heidegger, a writer whose work Derrida interprets as well, but for different reasons. Gadamer's main point is that Heidegger's work was a necessary step in the analysis of western philosophy, but that further analysis is required:

Heidegger revealed the essential forgetfulness of being that dominated western thought since

> Greek metaphysics due to the embarrassment caused by the problem of nothingness. By showing that the question of being included the question of nothingness, he joined the beginning to the end of metaphysics. That the question of being could represent itself as the question of nothingness postulated a thinking of nothingness repugnant to metaphysics....[and also] Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology and the analysis of the historicalness of There-being had as their aim a general renewal of the question of being and not a theory of the human sciences or a treatment of the impasses of historicism. These were merely particular contemporary problems in which he was able to demonstrate the consequences of his radical renewal of the question of being. (228-9)

Gadamer's mentioning of Heidegger is relevant to the endeavor of doing period style analysis because such analysis works in close proximity to a definition or notion of history. By speaking of Heidegger's inclusion of being with nothingness, Gadamer once again raises his own concern, namely, that the Romantic notion of history is questionable, since the goal-oriented nature of history is not obvious or present, for that matter. I do not believe that such questioning destabilizes the foundation behind period style analysis, but rather, it enriches the movement that occurs in such analysis. If history is redefined in a fashion that emphasizes the historical fragment, instead of pan-historical unity, with its goal-oriented structure, then period style analysis itself can be revitalized. In other words, the analyst can no longer work with the presupposition that each subsequent literary-historical period is more comprehensive and refined than earlier periods; it no longer remains adequate to say, for example, that the Biedermeier incorporates Romantic, Rococo, and Neoclassical tendencies by default, since it occurs later in time, and to delve no deeper into the validity of such a statement. Gadamer's questioning of the unity of historical unfolding opens up the structure of period style analysis as well, because the literary-historical fragment (a text, a style, etc.) becomes equally as important, perhaps more important than the larger, pan-historical structure within which such a fragment was previously seen as belonging by default. In simpler terms, what I am trying to say is that this Gadamerian questioning gives the literary text an obvious state of importance in such literary-historical endeavors (endeavors which include period style analysis) because those texts do not belong within periodizations by default but rather, they only enter a larger framework of cross-literary and cross-disciplinary relation and influence through interpretation, that in turn designates the texts as significant. If a goal is operating here then it is that of the interpreter and not of history or literary history in some detached, distant

sense, but this does not mean that the goal is automatically negative, since personalized. In the case of period style analysis, I believe that the goal is to create meaningful relationships between texts. Ultimately, the goal is interpretation, but an interpretation which acknowledges its own historicality, its situatedness, and Gadamer implies this as well when trying to decide if "Heidegger's ontological radicalisation can contribute to the construction of an historical hermeneutics" (232-3). The answer is a cautious yes because "Heidegger's intention was undoubtedly a different one, and we must beware of drawing over-hasty consequences from his existential analysis of the historicalness of There-being" (233).

Gadamer questions the notion of unified, goal-oriented history, but he does not believe that such a destabilization leads to complete and utter relativism, linked with extreme subjectivity. I have mentioned that a goal, if present in analytic endeavors, is tied to the interpreter, and does not emanate from other, extra-personal notions, but this should not be thought of negatively. Gadamer puts this slightly differently, tying interpretation to historical context: "...it is neither subjective nor objective, but...the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter. The anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding of a text is not an act of subjectivity, but proceeds from the communality that binds us to the tradition. But this is contained in our relation to tradition, in the constant process of education" (261). Since we interpret from within a framework of tradition, or from within a reinterpretation of tradition, we automatically protect ourselves from extreme relativism, that is, of course, if we are aware that tradition is present and is being reinterpreted in the first place. But more importantly, Gadamer's statement that interpretation/understanding is "neither subjective nor objective" allows him to ascribe a position for literary texts within the act of interpretation: "The place between strangeness and familiarity that a transmitted text has for us is that intermediate place between being an historically intended separate object and being part of a tradition. The true home of hermeneutics is in this intermediate area....[and thus its task] is not to develop a procedure of understanding, but to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place" (262-3). This comment is quite significant because period style analysis itself, in order to compare and explicate texts in such a fashion

as to acknowledge both their historical presence as aesthetic objects/fragments and their presence as parts of tradition, would have to occupy the same intermediate space as Gadamer's definition of hermeneutics. Put simply, period style analysis must also at some level be concerned with questions belonging to hermeneutic inquiry. Odoyevsky's Faust puts this less theoretically: "Therefore, gentlemen, don't say that it is sufficient to *know* in this world, without concern for the means by which this knowledge is obtained" (*Russian Nights* 153).

By placing literary texts and hermeneutic inquiry in an "intermediate place" "between strangeness and familiarity," Gadamer brings out the three major issues operating in such an endeavor, in my opinion. These issues are: (a) a text's meaning (b) temporal distance (c) historical meaning. By giving literary texts an intermediate rather than definite position, Gadamer opens up the question of meaning and authorial intention: "Not occasionally only, but always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author. That is why understanding is not merely a reproductive, but always a productive attitude as well" (264). Regarding temporal distance, Gadamer's placing of texts and inquiry in an intermediate place makes it productive: "Time is no longer primarily a gulf to be bridged, because it separates, but it is actually the supportive ground of process in which the present is rooted. Hence temporal distance is not something that must be overcome....It is not a yawning abyss, but is filled with the continuity of custom and tradition, in the light of which all that is handed down presents itself to us. Here it is not too much to speak of a genuine productivity of process" (264-5). And finally, Gadamer's placing of literature and hermeneutic inquiry into an intermediate place allows for an awareness of historical contexts to emerge. He speaks as follows: "True historical thinking must take account of its own historicality. Only then will it not chase the phantom of an historical object which is the object of progressive research,...A proper hermeneutics would have to demonstrate the effectivity of history within understanding itself. I shall refer to this as 'effective-history.' Understanding is, essentially, an effective-historical relation....Effective-historical consciousness is primarily consciousness of the hermeneutical situation" (267-8).

This third point, the principle of "effective-history," is the most important; an awareness

of such a point, or more broadly, an awareness of the "hermeneutical situation," as Gadamer puts it, will in turn allow for interpretations to develop which attempt to mediate between the "strangeness" and "familiarity" of literary texts, where there is both temporal distance and certain continuations of tradition. Period style analysis must as well take into account such a principle in order for it to become not a static comparison between texts but a mediation between literary-historical contexts, since a text is both historical and aesthetic, waiting for interpretation to expose its intermediary nature. But for interpretation to do such a thing, it must, as Gadamer says, be conscious of its own historicality. Gadamer breaks down the principle of effective-history further in order to show its bi-part structure, involving both "situation" (which is specific) and "horizon" (which is more general): "Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of 'situation' by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence an essential part of the concept of situation is the concept of 'horizon.' The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (269). Gadamer completes his definition of horizon by saying the following: "Understanding of the past, then, undoubtedly requires an historical horizon. But it is not the case that we acquire this horizon by placing ourselves within a historical situation. Rather, we must always already have a horizon in order to be able to place ourselves within a situation" (271). There is a condition of possibility here that is more conducive to period style analysis than Derrida's radicalization and transformation of Heidegger's ontological analysis into a facticity of language; the condition is that it is still possible to interpret/understand texts because interpretation itself operates from within a historical horizon, and can therefore meet a text half-way, or rather, to use Gadamer's term, can overlap with a text in "intermediate" places. Gadamer also speaks of a fusion of horizons, known as *Horizontverschmelzung*, and while this carries the continued implication that one cannot separate one's self from a horizon, there "is no suggestion, as in some versions of historicism, that the past is unknowable. Although Gadamer denies that the past is knowable *in itself* (in a strict sense of 'knowable'), apart from any mediation or contamination by the present, an understanding of the horizon of the past does become possible with the idea of a horizon as flexible and open" (qtd. in

Hoy 96). The question of single versus multiple horizons is of course raised here, and Hoy elaborates on this, implying the importance of such a question, but also summarizing the fundamental aspects of Gadamer's theory, and its relevance to a revision of the assumptions behind period style analysis:

> Gadamer himself raises the question that naturally comes to mind: why talk about a fusion of horizons and not just a building of one horizon? The term "fusion" (Verschmelzung) is indeed misunderstood if it is believed, as some accounts of Gadamer seem to indicate, that the fusion is a *reconciliation* of the horizons, a flattening out of the historical and perspectival differences. Although Gadamer does claim that a *single* horizon results...it must be remembered that a horizon is in flux and that the hermeneutic consciousness maintains a *tension* between the historical consciousness (of the past) and the strictly present horizon (Gegenwartshorizont). Without such tension, understanding of the past as different from the present would indeed be impossible; it is precisely the tension that allows us to become aware of our preunderstandings as our own. (97-8)

Patrick Brady's definition of period style terms as *"partly closed* and *partly open"* (23), William Park's suggestion that skepticism may be countered through the idea of probability (18-9), and Gadamer's elaboration on the intricacies of historical understanding all play a part in lending new life to period style analysis by correcting previous mistakes and enhancing already present benefits in such an endeavor. These comments are not only relevant but also interesting to keep in mind as I go on to offer a general overview of the Biedermeier milieu, before directly engaging representative writers. There is a "tension" (a word Gadamer uses when dealing with history) in such an overview, or in any overview, but this should not come as a surprise. Everything is, after all, as Gadamer implies throughout *Truth and Method*, a question of the general and the particular.

IV - Romanticism(s)

Romanticism as a movement is usually, broadly defined as extending from the late 1790s to about 1840 or so, when it is overtaken by the Realist paradigm; these might be the dates for German Romanticism. Werner P. Friedrich speaks as follows: "In Germany, it might be argued that the end of the Golden Age of German literature (indicated by the death of Goethe in 1832) signified also the end of Romanticism; it was the age, too, when epigones like Platen and Grillparzer preferred the Classicism of Italy and Greece to the formlessness that had been Romanticism" (259). In England, it is thought that Romanticism begins around the time of the French Revolution (1789), and extends to about Byron's death (1824). Examples can be given of other national literatures as well. However, it is precisely this over-generalization in period styles and literary movements which leads to such Gadamerian "tensions" as I am attempting to elaborate on in this study. A shift in outlook, paradigm, whatever we wish to call it, seems to occur sometime within the period broadly defined as Romanticism. We can see the difference by looking at what various critics say. Frederick C. Beiser, in his article, "Early Romanticism and the *Aufklärung*," argues that our difficulty in understanding the early phase of Romanticism stems from the fact that the representatives of the movement were "neither revolutionaries nor reactionaries. Rather, they were simply reformers, moderates in the classical tradition..." (321). Beiser even looks upon the representatives as "nothing less than the Aufklärer of the 1790s. They seem to differ from the earlier generation of Aufklärer only in their disillusionment with enlightened absolutism and in their readiness to embrace republican ideals" (322). M. H. Abrams, in his article, "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age," speaks of how the Romantic poet of the 1790s, in dealing with current affairs, sets up a procedure which is often panoramic, where his stage is cosmic, "his agents quasi-mythological, and his logic of events apocalyptic. Typically this mode of Romantic vision fuses history, politics, philosophy, and religion into one grand design, by asserting Providence—or some form of natural teleology..." (45-6). That is Abrams' view of the 1790s in England. Laurence S. Lockridge, linking Shelley with first-generation Romantics, speaks as follows:

> A related difference between Wordsworthian and Shelleyan sensibility is the weak function of memory in the latter. Shelley tends not to make memory thematic; like Blake, he is prospective in vision. When personal and political hopes are dimmed—in the Jane poems, for example—memory gives evidence that a possible future has been cut off, the serpent shut out of paradise. Wordsworth works with the disturbing double image of past and present, as he struggles to overcome elegy; Shelley's double image is a radiant unrealized future that legislates against the doleful imagery of the present—and he must struggle to overcome hatred. The triumph over hatred begins the process of renovation in *Prometheus Unbound*, which is Shelley's answer to the tragic naturalism of Wordsworth. (283-4)

Northrop Frye, in his article, "The Drunken Boat: The Revolutionary Element in Romanticism," speaks of how in "Romanticism proper a prominent place in sense experience is given to the ear, an excellent receiver of oracles but poor in locating things accurately in space....In later poetry, beginning with *symbolisme* in France,...more emphasis is thrown on vision. In Rimbaud,...the *illuminations* are thought of pictorially; even the vowels must be visually colored....Such an emphasis leads to a technique of fragmentation. Poe's attack on the long poem is not a Romantic but an anti-Romantic manifesto, as the direction of its influence indicates" (23-4). Henri Peyre, speaking of French Romanticism, designates a particular group of representatives by these characteristics: "The second generation of romantics born around 1810 had [by] about 1835-40 caused some stir by its peculiar behavior and by its literary lucubrations. They were called 'Groupe de la rue Doyenné,' that is *Jeunes-France* after an amusing book of Théophile Gautier 'the generation of art for art's sake'" (qtd. in McClanahan 13). McClanahan adds that as "one approaches the 1850's [in France], apparently Romanticism has absorbed the coterie of 'art for art's sake'" (13). Marshall Brown, assessing German Romanticism, writes that "the later romantics were well aware of [a] fundamental change—that 'the circle [of earlier Romanticism] had become an ellipse'" (21). He suggests that the elliptical quality of later Romanticism is best seen in "the romantic novel" with its "duality of form" (204), whereby the shift from early to late Romanticism can also be read as a shift from poetry to prose. And "chronic dualism" is the sign under which "all the major fiction of the later romantics" stands (205). Stephen C. Behrendt, in his article, "Remapping the Landscape: The Romantic Literary Community Revisited," speaks as follows of English Romanticism, also indicating a shift in outlook within the movement, but unlike Lockridge, he tends to link Wordsworth with its earlier phase:

> ...let me suggest that once we begin to rethink British Romanticism by re-historicizing both the literary and extra-literary materials and their cultural contexts, the old distinction between "first" and "second generation" Romantics may prove to be more important, more profound, than we have usually understood. The more one views the literary scene up to the beginning of the Regency, especially when the non-canonical materials are added to the mix, the more we see in the arts and in social culture alike the culmination of the literary, artistic, socio-politico-economic, and cultural ethos of "the eighteenth century." What follows ushers in the "modern" period by breaking dramatically with what had gone before. The younger Romantics' rejection of Wordsworth—especially in the aftermath of *The Excursion* in 1814—is symptomatic of a much more profound disruption and then reorientation of culture that takes place in the decade of the Regency. This reorientation shifts British culture—and its aesthetic artifacts—away from an earlier paradigm organized around Sentiment, engagement, and the paradigm of a self-sustaining social unit, and toward a new one characterized by anxiety, irony, dislocation, and social dysfunction, which is in many ways an *inversion* of that culture of Sentiment. (15)

Perhaps the question of Romanticism is clarified a bit if we look at the periodization that is usually accepted for the German Romantic movement. Friedrich Hölderlin and Jean Paul Richter are thought of "as forerunners of German Romanticism. The first was the ecstatic yet despairing prophet-poet of an imminent Second Coming; the second, a novelist of the fantastic and grotesque who had only marginal influence on the development of Romantic poetry" (Hanak 63). The first phase of Romanticism is said to begin in 1796, "Tieck's novel *The Story of Mr. William Lovell*...[being] one of the earliest indicators of the emergence of Romanticism proper...he also translated Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and was generally considered the head of the Romantic school, even after he had openly disassociated himself from the movement" (63). This first phase is also known as the "Jena-Berlin circle" and apart from Tieck, also includes the novelist Wackenroder and Novalis, "the poet of night, death and transfiguration" (63). It also includes the Schlegel brothers who founded the journal *Athenäum* for aesthetics and literary criticism, the theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, and the philosophers Schelling and Fichte (63). The Jena center of Early Romanticism disintegrates with Novalis' death in 1801, the relocation of Tieck to Dresden, and of Friedrich Schlegel to Paris (63-4). The second phase "is known under the various titles of Middle Romanticism, Younger Romanticism, High Romanticism and Heidelberg Romanticism. It flourished from about 1804 till the opening of the Congress of Vienna in 1815" (64). The principle focal point of this phase was Heidelberg, but it also included Dresden, Vienna, Halle, Kassel, Marburg, and Göttingen (64). Representatives of this second phase are Joseph Görres, Achim von Arnim, and Clemens

Brentano; Görres started out as a partisan of the French Revolution but later embraced the cause of German nationalism against Napoleon, while Arnim and Brentano continued Herder's research in Germanic folklore, editing some 600 folksongs in *The Youth's Cornucopia* (1806-8) (64). At the same time, the brothers Grimm made Göttingen, Marburg, and Kassel the centers of study for German philology, antiquities, and cultural history, and of course, they published *Fairy Tales for Children* (1812-15) (64-5). Two other representatives of this phase are Adalbert von Chamisso, who explores the theme of a split personality in *The Wondrous Story of Peter Schlemihl* (1814), and E. T. A. Hoffmann, who was a master of the fantastic tale, publishing such collections as *The Devil's Elixir* (1815-16), *Night Tales* (1817), and *The Serapion Brothers* (1819-21) (65-6). The third and final phase of Romanticism is represented by Joseph von Eichendorff, the poet of *Waldrauschen (Forest Murmurs)*, and Ludwig Uhland, known for his paraphrases of medieval German ballads and his "attunement to the liberal-bourgeois Biedermeier style, uniquely typical of German mores between 1815 and 1848" (67). This last phase also includes two other figures who contrast with the life-affirming Romantic Realism of the previous two writers; they are Nikolaus Lenau, who had a tragic sense of life, and Heinrich Heine, author of such collections of poetry as *From the Mattress Grave* (1855), and whose work is more ambiguous than Lenau's, often quite satirical, and is said to destroy Romantic Irony and anticipate "the elegant nastiness and biting elitism of Baudelaire's pathbreaking symbolism and the life-lashing vitalism of Nietzsche's aphoristic sallies" (67-8).

In *The Taming of Romanticism: European Literature and the Age of Biedermeier*, Virgil Nemoianu elaborates on this closing phase of Romanticism, often called Biedermeier, which lasted from approximately 1815 to 1848 (1). Before giving characteristics of the Biedermeier, Nemoianu outlines the various scholarly endeavors which attempted to define this as a late and/or post-Romantic period over the years. The concept of Biedermeier as a literary-historical period "was put forward in the 1920s by Paul Kluckhohn, Julius Wiegand, and others, and more systematically after 1931 by Günther Weydt and Wilhelm Bietak, who triggered a substantial scholarly debate in the 1930s" (3-4). The participants agreed that the writings of the period they were discussing were marked by certain common features, such as an "inclination toward morality, a mixture of realism

and idealism, peaceful domestic values, idyllic intimacy, lack of passion, coziness, contentedness, innocent drollery, conservatism, resignation," and so on (4). The term "Biedermeier" had originally been derogatory because of Gottlieb Biedermeier, a character who was invented by Adolf Kussmaul and Ludwig Eichrodt, and introduced to the public in the Munich *Fliegende Blätter* in 1855: "this smug and cozy philistine was a caricature of the old-fashioned petty bourgeois of southern Germany and Austria" (4). Already by 1900, art historians and fashion historians were using the term Biedermeier to describe the intimate, pretty, and quiet paintings of the 1815 to 1848 period (Carl Spitzweg, Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, etc.) or even the furniture and dress styles (4). The term was also used to evoke the tone and color of an entire age by the nostalgic-ironic novelists Georg Hermann, in his *Jettchen Gebert* (1906), and Thomas Mann, in his *Buddenbrooks* (1901) (4). The debates of the 1930s concerning the Biedermeier did have their problems, among which is the contemporary suspicion that the reappraisal of the 1820s and 1830s was nationalistically motivated: "much earlier, Adolf Bartels, an anti-Semitic populist, had tried to use Austrian Biedermeier writers as a weapon against the 'degenerate' modernism of pre-World War I literature" (4). The other suspicion was that the term Biedermeier is just a tedious concoction, a fruit of, as Nemoianu says, "the tireless *geistesgeschichtlich* urge to invent periodizations, define the spirit of an age, and multiply the breed of historical types" (5). The third objection was that the really important and dynamic force of the 1830s and 1840s is *Das junge Deutschland* (with figures like Karl Gutzkow, Heinrich Heine, Heinrich Laube, Ludwig Börne, etc.), which, like similar contemporary movements (*La giovine Italia*, etc.), represented national and radical tendencies, while the Biedermeier is merely a provincial and epigonic movement, limited to writers like Eduard Mörike, Franz Grillparzer, Jeremias Gotthelf, Anette von Droste-Hülshoff, and so on (5). Nonetheless, there were attempts to rescue the Biedermeier from such restrictions in scope; Hermann Pongs found "that demonic and grotesque characters and situations abound in these writings," Rudolf Majut claimed "that the Biedermeier could only be understood as a dialectical whole, covering all the writing of the period," and most importantly, Friedrich Sengle wrote his monumental three-volume *Biedermeierzeit*, in which he argued that the shifts in social psychology of the time, the objec-

tive historical conditions, and the agglomeration of contrasting literary developments, when combined, created a cultural climate that was different from both the early and high Romantic periods and from the post-1850 Realist age (qtd. in Nemoianu 5-6). According to Sengle, the term Biedermeier worked best as a traditional description of a particular "current" in German literature of the time, while "Biedermeierzeit" could be applied to the entire, Metternichian-Restoration period so as to accommodate even opposing literary trends, broadly united by a framework of socio-historical events (qtd. in Nemoianu 6). Nemoianu puts it in his own terms, saying that wrapped around Biedermeier events was "Metternich's system, not the repressive ogre-like enclosure it was made out to be by partisan commentators, but rather a dialectical and sophisticated framework that could preserve stability by absorbing and particularly by expecting opposition from within and without" (12).

Nemoianu seems well aware of the contamination, or rather, Gadamerian "tension," that in part defines the Biedermeier, for when he defines its nature, its constitution, we can see the Biedermeier absorbing certain Romantic tendencies, but we can also see it struggling to define itself as an autonomous entity in relation to its "loftier" predecessor. The disciples of Friedrich Schiller, after 1815, as Nemoianu says, are "rare birds: few were inclined to accept play and aesthetic creation as privileged areas of humaneness..." (6-7). The aesthetician J. F. Herbart was typical of the Biedermeier, because he was anti-Kantian and anti-Hegelian, a pragmatic idealist, who believed that art has some autonomy but that it should not be regarded as a salvation and should be adapted to reality to "provide service" (7). Such utilitarian tendencies are represented by the first, modern network of "popularization," as well, as Nemoianu calls it (7). In the 1820s, 30s, and 40s, there were massive extensions of publishing houses, collections, libraries, and newspapers; Emile Girardin's *La Presse* (1836) is considered the first modern newspaper (7). "In Germany the number of published titles hardly rose from 1800 to 1821, but tripled in the next two decades" (7). Sensational literature and fairy tales flourished as never before; collections of the brothers Grimm appeared between 1812 and 1826, and England was hit slightly later, by translations of Hans Christian Andersen in 1846, and of F. E. Paget's *The Hope of the Katzekopfs*, in 1844 (7-8). Even in sci-

ence, the lofty and visionary theories of earlier times were now empirically tested and directed toward practical application; André-Marie Ampère, Jöns Berzelius, Justus Liebig, Hans Christian Oersted, Georg Ohm, Farraday, and others, were characteristic of the age (8). There is even a Biedermeier age of medicine, characterized by an uneasy empiricism that tried to accommodate James Mill's empirical views with echoes of the earlier "organic vitality" theory; Samuel Hahnemann took the mystical principles of earlier Romanticism and gave them a practical twist by starting a curative industry, homeopathy (8-9). In historical study, the universal syntheses of Schelling and Hegel were replaced by the scruples of Barthold Niebuhr and Leopold von Ranke (the latter being nonetheless "influenced" by Hegel, as Gadamer says), and by Friedrich Karl von Savigny's attempts at objectivity: "the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* directed by Georg Heinrich Pertz got underway in 1823. August Böckh began the *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecorum* in 1828, while Georg Grotefend and Jean-François Champollion deciphered the texts of Persian and Egyptian civilization (the latter in the 1820s)" (9). The range of terms in the dictionary of the *Académie Française* was expanded, and dictionaries with 110,000 to 170,000 entries became popular (9). Friedrich Fröbel, deciding to test the earlier Romantic concepts of play, symbol, original purity, and natural organicism, initiated the kindergarten (9). In industry, typically Biedermeier features could be felt as well, because at the same time that Robert Fulton's steamship was revolutionizing communication, sailing ships were reaching their highest flowering, in the 1840s and 50s; the tension between the stagecoach and the railway is also symbolic of the age (9). "Eight of the major German museums (including the Glyptothek and what is now called the Alte Pinakothek in Munich) were initiated between 1815 and 1855,..." (10). The Biedermeier was also an age of caricature and ironic art, like that of the post-Hogarthians (George Cruikshank, Thomas Rowlandson, James Gillray, etc.) (10). Opera houses, public orchestras, and conservatories of music also began in the period; the virtuoso performer was another feature (Paganini, Chopin, Liszt, etc.), and also, "the salaries of theater directors and actors in Berlin in the 1820s and 30s could compete with and surpass those of senior government officials" (10-11). Nemoianu argues that even the imagery of Santa Claus, and of a cozy and sociable Christmas, was developed in the Biedermeier (11). Fashion had also

changed, because the free hairstyles of the Romantics were tamed into a "balance of tightness and looseness," the cravat displaced the jabot (symbolizing a historical nostalgia for the rococo), and the dandyism of Beau Brummel in England became prominent; in 1820s Vienna, the tailor Josef Gunkl channelled "extravagant impulses in refined, orderly sartorial structures" (11). Personal hygiene was also an outcome of the Biedermeier, and even degenerated into hypochondria, "the light chronic ailment produced or maintained by the imagination" (11). And finally, Nemoianu says, experimental balloon flights were also a product of the time, "symptomatic not only of the search for knowledge and communication but also of the search for controlled adventure" (11). These last two characteristics are illustrated well by Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "The Balloon Hoax," respectively.

Nemoianu is not alone in his argument for a distinct Biedermeier age (that differs from early and high Romanticism and the post-1850 Realist age), and his views are echoed in the comments of others. On the website, *Bidermajer u Hrvatskoj (Biedermeier in Croatia)*, Vladimir Maleković, in his introductory article of the same title, gives the etymology for Biedermeier style as follows:

> Its roots are in English Rococo furniture (Chippendale), in "Gothic forms" which will experience their revival at the end of the eighteenth century, especially in Germanic lands; in classicism, from which it takes, among certain decorative elements, a tendency toward the functional; in the Empire style, to which it owes something that G. Semper describes as "antike Formalismus." Without a doubt the Biedermeier owes most to England, where already in the second half of the eighteenth century there was a search for unity between technology and art, and the beginnings of industrial technology use, especially in craft manufacture....Cultural differences aided the transition of classicism and Empire to Biedermeier, and the conflict of interest between countries which decisively influenced that process (England, France, Austria, Germanic lands), if anything, gave an ironic context to things....The doors to the Empire style were opened across Europe by Napoleon's victories, the doors to the Biedermeier were opened by his defeat....The history of art has already shown that those places receptive to classicism, particularly the Empire style, were ideal places for the development of a new style—Biedermeier. Among such places is Croatia, where classicist and Empire cultures penetrated directly: from the Sava in the north to the Adriatic in the south during the time of Napoleon's Illyria, notably, "French Croatia" [my translation]. (Maleković)

It was in the 1830s that reading rooms and clubs were opened up in Croatia, and 1838 was a particularly big year, when Ljudevit Vukotinović published his *Pjesme i pripovjetke (Poems and Stories)*, Dimitrija Demeter his *Dramatička pokušenja (Dramatic Attempts)*, and Brodjanin Stjepan Marjanović his *Vitije i igrokazi (Stories and Plays)* (Tomašović).

In his book on the Serbian Biedermeier poet, Jovan Sterija Popović, who is described as a "humorist and parodist," Dragiša Živković briefly defines the Biedermeier as follows:

> The main characteristic of this epoch is the mixture of directions and trends, so that the Biedermeier appears as a stylistic complex in which come together Byronists, late classicists, and late Romantic epigones, young German, liberally oriented revolutionaries and formalistically oriented novelists. And these "feuding brothers" of the Biedermeier, so similar in general worldly feeling and in melancholic mood, but then again so different in their literary orientations, use parody as a general offensive tool. Parodied are the classicist epic and Baroque novel, Romantic idealism and sentimental pathos, enlightened treatises and moralistic writings. At the basis of all this lies a strengthening of traditional consciousness and conservative thoughts tied together with an ever growing historicism. Pushed out of politics, the Biedermeier citizen turns to literature and cultural works, hoping to become the equal of the nobility not only through monetary wealth but also through cultivation and style of life. That aristocratic-civic culture ("transforming of nobility to bourgeois" and "aristocratization of civilians") slowly erases and dulls class boundaries; the satire which is intensively nursed in this period is directed more toward human imperfections than toward social-class oppositions. From there, in that genre, we come upon a caricaturing of banal and trivial occurrences in human behavior:...[my translation]. (10-11)

Živković also mentions that Edward Young's "Night Thoughts" (1742) played a strong influence on Sterija's work, and more generally on that entire literary period, because there are "very obvious similarities between certain poems and motifs in Serbian poetry of the first half of the nineteenth century and Young's poetic thoughts...[my translation]" (86). As early as 1819, Young's name is mentioned in Serbian literature, when a young professor, "Georgije Magarašević, unhappy with the state of Serbian literature in that period...published under a pseudonym (Toma Ljubibratić) two translations from Wieland and Young...[my translation]" (90-1). It is interesting that Živković argues for the importance of Young's poetry in the work of a Biedermeier writer, Sterija, because there is a rather well known reference to the former in Poe's "The Premature Burial" (1844) too: "I thought upon other subjects than Death. I discarded my medical books. 'Buchan' I burned. I read no 'Night Thoughts'—no fustian about church-yards—no bugaboo tales—*such as this*" (*Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe* 3:969).

Donald Fanger's book, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism: A Study of Dostoevsky in Relation to Balzac, Dickens, and Gogol*, should also be mentioned. It is here that Fanger speaks of how the pure Realism of Dostoevsky's later literary career, which begins with the publication of *Recollections from a Prison House in Siberia* in 1861, also known as *Notes from a Dead House*, and especially with *Notes from Underground*, published in 1863, is preceded by the early phase of the 1840s when he

published his first novel, *Poor Folk*, and also *The Double* (1846 and 1847, respectively). Fanger never calls this early phase Biedermeier, but he does call it a "qualified realism" that shares certain impulses with Romanticism, and he cites the example of France in the 1820s, where literary terminology supports his point, because "the words *romantisme* and *réalisme* were practically interchangeable in the press of the day" (12-3).

In my endeavor to define a Biedermeier milieu, or more broadly, to use Sengle's term, a Biedermeierzeit, I should also mention the nearly unheard of Russian writer, Prince Vladimir Fyodorovich Odoyevsky (1804-69), whose work will be looked at more closely in the next chapters, and who seems more of a Biedermeier figure than Pushkin, even if we take the latter's "Queen of Spades" into consideration. The beginning of the Biedermeier in Russia would probably coincide with the failure of the Decembrist uprising of 1825, but it might also be said that the Decembrist uprising was itself of Biedermeier proportions, being a caricature of the French Revolution. Jacob Talmon believes "that the 1848 revolutions were an unsuccessful, downgraded version (a 'caricature') of the great French Revolution, an observation that echoes Tocqueville" (qtd. in Nemoianu 13). A similar observation could be made of the two Serbian uprisings of 1804 and 1815, respectively, which have Biedermeier proportions, particularly the second one, or of the Croatian Illyrian movement of the 1830s and 40s. Nemoianu even speaks of how Eastern European Romanticism, in general, skipped a phase, and he gives the following example, saying that in "Russian literature in the 1780s and 1790s neoclassicism was being weakened by sentimentalism but was not being discarded altogether [and never was]....An unstable mixture of romantic influences and classical traditions flows quietly and continuously from 1780 to 1840 or so [in Russia]....Thus Russian literature skipped high romanticism, and 'became Biedermeier'" [but this was also the case in Germany, etc., if we argue for the impossibility of high Romanticism] (135-8). Nearly all of Odoyevsky's literary output came between the late 1820s and 1844, when he published his frame-tale novel, *Russian Nights*. His earlier collection, which can also be described as Biedermeier, is *Motley Tales* (now better known as *Variegated Tales*), published in 1833. The reason I mention Odoyevsky is because much of his work can be read as an encyclopedic account of the Bieder-

meier period, but also as an encyclopedically-charged narrative, a form which is itself symptomatic of Biedermeier tendencies (the need for museums, anthologies, bigger dictionaries, etc.). Odoyevsky did in fact write two "society tales," similar to Pushkin's "Queen of Spades" (which is itself symptomatic of the Biedermeier tendency toward socially-oriented narration). The first of Odoyevsky's two tales is "Princess Mimi" (1834), where Mimi is a persecutor of those who incur her displeasure, such as a blameless Baroness, against whom Princess Mimi orchestrates a "vicious whispering campaign" (qtd. in Cornwell, *The life, times, and milieu of V. F. Odoyevsky* 52). The other tale, "Princess Zizi," was published in 1839 but written in 1836, in time to receive the "approval" of Pushkin; it starts off as an epistolary tale of high Romantic intrigue, but then degenerates into a society thriller hinging upon emotional and sexual deception, stock exchange speculation, and property swindle; the work of the positive heroine Zizi is undercut by the "deliberate literariness" and artificiality of several, less positive characters, like Gorodkov, a "domineering classicist," and Radetsky, described as "our romantic" and "your Childe Harold," plus several other allusions to the literary milieu of Odoyevsky's period, which furnish the work with a veneer of Biedermeier pastiche (qtd. in Cornwell 53). Nemoianu mentions Odoyevsky in the context of the following passage:

> Gogol's and Pushkin's relationship to many key Biedermeier orientations become more obvious for those who interpret their work in the vicinity of smaller, even more strikingly Biedermeier figures. The theatrical writing of Apollon Grigoryev and V. F. Odoyevsky was merely organicist—it shied away from the absolute claims of high-romantic titanism. The overwhelming influence of Schelling on these, as well as on D. V. Venevitinov or the poet Tyutchev appears to be similar in nature to that which the German philosopher exerted on German intellectual life during the same period: a moderating, harmonizing influence. (Indeed, until deep into the 1920s, the intellectual Right and Left in Russia were divided, arguably, into a Schelling and a Hegel line of influence.) (150)

Edgar Allan Poe, a writer whose work will also be looked at more closely in the next chapters, seems to display certain Biedermeier tendencies, most obviously in such tales as "Philosophy of Furniture" (1840) and the landscape tale, "Landor's Cottage" (1849), which is subtitled "A Pendant to 'The Domain of Arnheim'" and is in fact more modest in description than "The Domain of Arnheim" (1846). Poe's ratiocinative trilogy might also be evocative of a Biedermeier milieu, particularly "The Purloined Letter" (1844), where there appears to be a parody of censorship, among

other things, the original message intended for the Queen never being revealed to the reader, only the message which Dupin scribbles into the facsimile for the Minister D—. Regarding the situation in Austria, Alice M. Hanson speaks as follows: "By 1801, the independent bureau of censorship was incorporated into the Polizeihofstelle. Laws governing censorship were then expanded in 1812 and amended throughout the period from 1820 to 1848" (40). It is said that by "1834, an anonymous writer claimed that [even] secret police had infiltrated the entire nation, guessing that there were over six thousand officials and countless more secret agents" (51). Censors also screened "collections of student songs. Their duties were [however] made difficult by the common practice among students of turning innocuous songs into witty, but lewd, parodies" (53). Such an atmosphere of policial intrigue and competition is certainly felt in "The Purloined Letter." It may therefore be possible to fit Poe into the context of a broad Biedermeierzeit, where Lenau and particularly Heine are located, but he also seems, at moments, to fit into the high Romantic paradigm, if we place the early Hoffmann there as well.

There is a tendency to cut the nineteenth century in half with the convenient year 1850, and to refer to everything afterwards as a road to Modernism, via Victorian duality and other things, and so, the odd balance which the Biedermeier maintains does not go beyond 1850. Jon Thompson singles out Baudelaire and Flaubert as the first figures of Modernism (29). Ali Behdad mentions Flaubert in the following way: "Whereas Nerval in his *Voyage en Orient* announces *nostalgically* the disappearance of the orientalist savant, Flaubert [in *Notes de voyages*] declares in *melancholia* the emergence of the belated orientalist whose split identity imposes a diffracted discourse" (54). This all creates problems when we deal with Poe. We might call him Biedermeier because he is not fully Romantic, but because of Baudelaire, and the influence which Poe plays through Baudelaire on Symbolism and eventually, Modernism, Poe no longer fits into a Biedermeier paradigm either because the latter is about bourgeois balances that get cut off around 1850, and besides, much of Poe's writing is not exactly about bourgeois balances. Poe's influence becomes more powerful after 1850, when the balancing is gone. But such tensions in periodization are actually fruitful; they are the inspiration behind a study such as this one. Werner P. Friedrich,

for his part, while discussing Romanticism, says the following: "Of Poe's impact upon European, notably French, Symbolism, we shall speak in our next chapter—but [James Fenimore] Cooper should be mentioned right here, for in spite of the mediocrity of many of his novels, he was the first to introduce on a large scale into world literature the theme of the American Indian....[he] created a long-winded cycle of frontier tales, of exotic landscapes and valiant warriors that made him quickly famous all over Europe" (329-30). It is obvious here that Cooper is spoken of as the more properly Romantic writer. Nemoianu speaks as follows, nonetheless allowing Poe the position of late Romantic writer: "Literatures without a core-romantic production tend to evolve a final phase [the Biedermeier] between romanticism and Victorianism or symbolism (hence Mácha, Krasinski and Norwid, Eminescu, Nerval, Poe). Diagonal correspondences enrich dialectically simple historical evolution, and there is a particularly close relationship between the German *Frühromantiker* and the symbolist movement, as both Béguin and Furst have pointed out" (238). Davidson is faced with problems and contradictions when trying to situate Poe:

> Poe belonged to the Romantic age; he could be considered almost an archetype of the Romantic mind; yet Poe himself never had a "Romantic revolution." That is, he never in his own mind and experience passed through those stages of self-awareness and development which have always made the "Romantic mind" so fascinating to watch and its artistic products so wide-ranging in their imaginative scope. Poe never changed; he never grew; he remained to the end of his life an exponent of the hypostatized self-as-subject with which Romantic artists necessarily begin. (256-7)

I will be analyzing Poe's oeuvre alongside Odoyevsky's. Were the two writers even aware of each other's work, one might ask? I doubt that Poe knew of Odoyevsky. Regarding Odoyevsky's possible knowledge of Poe, Joan Delaney Grossman cites in her notes, no. 54, as follows:

> Of the early representatives of science fiction in Russia, only V. F. Odoevskij wrote at a time which would make it chronologically possible for him to have read Poe. The relevant work might be his unfinished *4338-j god: fantasticeskij roman*, presumably begun around 1838. In connection with Odoevskij's novel one thinks of Poe's "Mellonta Tauta" and possibly others as well. However, while Odoevskij knew English, there is no evidence available to me that he knew Poe. It seems more likely that both works represent a mildly popular genre of that time. (222)

She also mentions Poe's "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion" prior to a brief discussion of Odoyevsky's "The Year 4338," and says that both pieces were "written almost simultaneously,"

Poe publishing his story in 1839 (133). Odoyevsky's work is "lightly satirical, ingeniously scientific, and also concerned with the approach of a comet. Society gives the matter only slight attention, however, certain that human ingenuity will take care of any emergency. Some of the ladies even wear headdresses *à la comète*. It is not certain from Odoevskij's presentation that catastrophe is in the offing" (133). Victor Terras' statement indicates that Odoyevsky knew Poe's work: "...Odoevsky wrote some interesting phantastic tales, in the manner of E. A. Poe rather than of Hoffmann, *as he himself said* [my italics]" (Terras 314).

Could Odoyevsky have come across some of Poe's work in Russian? Grossman has found through her investigations that the earliest date for a translation of Poe's work into Russian is 1847, when "The Gold-Bug" appeared as an unsigned item in *The New Library for Education*, a journal for young people and their educators (Grossman 24). The following year, in 1848, another translation of "The Gold-Bug" came out, anonymous and disguised, under the title "An American Treasure Hunter" (24). The first translation was not done from the original English text, but from an earlier French translation dated to 1845, which was made by a certain Alphonse Borghers and appeared in the *Revue britannique* for November of that year, under the title of "Le Scarabée d'Or" (24). The 1848 translation was also done from a French version, dating from the same year, made by a certain Mme. Isabelle Meunier (27). The selection of Poe's stories available to Russian readers broadened in the 1850s when several more translations came out, some of which appeared in the journal *Library of Reading*, and which appear to have been translations from the English original; they include "The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall," "A Descent into the Maelström," "The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherazade," "The Oblong Box," "The Man of the Crowd," "William Wilson," and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (28). While it is difficult to say whether or not Odoyevsky had read the translations which came out in the late 1840s, the translations of the 1850s pose greater questions. One thing we should keep in mind is that the translations of the 1850s demonstrate a tortured relationship with the English language; in the story of Hans Pfaall, Poe writes: "We shipped several prodigious seas, one immediately after the other," while in the Russian version, it comes out like this: "as if on us from above poured several large

lakes" (qtd. in Grossman 28). In the case of "The Man of the Crowd," Poe writes: "The tribe of clerks was an obvious one," while the translation reads: "It is easy to distinguish the Anglican clergy" (qtd. in Grossman 28).

Odoyevsky most certainly encountered Poe's work in 1861, perhaps first coming across the now famous preface to three translated tales which appeared in Dostoyevsky's journal *Time* for January of that year: the tales were "The Black Cat," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Devil in the Belfry," and appear to be based on the French texts of Baudelaire (31). Later in 1861, Dostoyevsky's *Time* also printed the first 13 chapters of Poe's *Narrative of A. Gordon Pym* (31-2). It is the January 1861 preface that Charles E. Passage notes in his study, saying that Dostoevsky favored Hoffmann's work over Poe's (Passage 215). Joan Grossman also cites this attitude, mentioning that Dostoevsky's rejection of Poe as Hoffmann's peer is in the nature of a rebuttal (Grossman 32). As Grossman says, "Dostoevskij distinguishes [Poe's] method from the genuine fantasy of Hoffmann, who would seem almost to believe in the secret, enchanted world he creates. Poe, then, is capricious rather than fantastic" (32). Dostoevsky himself says that "if there is fantasy in Poe, it is a kind of materialistic fantasy, if one may speak of such a thing. It is obvious that he is wholly American even in his most fantastic tales" (qtd. in Grossman 32). Nonetheless, he praises Poe on his "power of specific detail" which convinces readers of the possibility of fictional existences and realities (qtd. in Grossman 33).

Odoyevsky would not read any more translations of Poe's work. The next translations came out in 1874, five years after his death, and were done from Baudelaire's French texts by Nikolaj Selgunov, who perceived a psychological depth in Poe's work, and they appeared in the St. Petersburg journal *Affairs*: the stories were "Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Gold-Bug," "The Masque of the Red Death," "Berenice," "The Black Cat," "The Tell-Tale Heart," "Ligeia," and "Shadow" (Grossman 36-7). The next major translations were two collected editions in 1885, by two publishers, and two major projects of 1895, one by G. Klepackij, the other by the poet Konstantin Balmont, which was an event in the rise of Russian Symbolism and came close to duplicating Baudelaire's service to Poe in France of the 1850s (66-72).

I should also mention that Poe's and Odoyevsky's work will be analyzed alongside Hoffmann's. Why will this be done, one might ask? For one thing, Dostoyevsky engaged in a rudimentary comparison by preferring Hoffmann to Poe. For another thing, Odoyevsky was called "Hoffmann II" by Countess Rostopchina, and more importantly, his *Russian Nights* is loosely based on the frame-tale format of *The Serapion Brothers* (Passage 91). And thirdly, Hoffmann is another problem for periodization: "...a number of new figures rose to prominence, and they may be said to have placed themselves halfway between romanticism and the Biedermeier. For example, E. T. A. Hoffmann...[and] Later romanticism grows under the sign of E. T. A. Hoffmann,..." (Nemoianu 43, 31).

When engaging in a comparative analysis one must always keep in mind the primary idea, or run the risk of pointlessness. The main idea, in this case, is the illusive nature of late or post-Romantic, Biedermeierzeit writing, as represented, quite possibly, by Poe and Odoyevsky, and perhaps, to a lesser extent, by Hoffmann. The idea, in a broader sense, is the many variations which define Romanticism as a movement, but of course, limited to certain writers who are being looked at. At its most specific level, the point of the next few chapters is to see how much Poe's and Odoyevsky's work differs from or is similar to Hoffmann's. There is also another question operating here, tied to the former point. How significant are the similarities and/or differences between Poe's and Odoyevsky's work? This last question interweaves itself into the overall analytic endeavor, and is reflected in my hypothesis for this section of the study: I suspect that while there are differences between the Poe and Odoyevsky oeuvres, they are not as significant as the differences which distinguish such late Romantic work from Hoffmann's "High Romanticism," irrespective of the fact that Hoffmann may himself be described as a transitional figure, as Nemoianu implies (43, 31). Schapiro might complain that such a statement provides only "suggestive *aperçus*" and "analogical speculations" (qtd. in Park 18), but, I will say, it is still a good starting point for further, close-textual analysis. I engage the Poe, Odoyevsky, and Hoffmann oeuvres within a framework of sorts. Representative works are chosen and read in relation to four major themes and/or motifs, in the following order: the Doppelgänger, the artist, the detective, and the

fantastic. My intention is not to establish a link between all of these themes, but if similarities and overlaps are noticeable in the discussion, so much the better. These themes are important in Romanticism, and that is why they are mentioned here. Differences and similarities between chosen works by Poe and Odoyevsky, when juxtaposed with these four themes common to Romanticism, will hopefully shed more light on themselves as *texts which are in a tenuous relationship with the Romantic paradigm*. The four themes are basically intended as grounding rods, as temporary pillars which aid in locating the tales in space, and hence, in relation to each other, but these themes are by no means omniscient or totalizing, intended to subsume and drown the subtleties of the tales, where doubles, artists, detectives, and the fantastic often overlap. They are tools of criticism. They are, if anything, Schapiro's hated, suggestive *aperçus*, nonetheless guiding us toward the probabilities of the text.

V - Doppelgänger

I begin with the Doppelgänger. Using Poe's "William Wilson" (1839), Odoyevsky's "A City Without a Name" (1839), and finally, Hoffmann's "The Doubles" (1825), I will attempt exposing the similarities and/or differences between the figures of the *double* and *spectator*. Hopefully, after a discussion of certain features of these works has been completed, a larger definition will have been achieved, that links the double (and the Doppelgänger) with the high Romantic aesthetic and that links the spectator with the toned down nature of the late Romantic, Biedermeier period in letters.

The common interpretation of "William Wilson" will usually indicate that the narrator's double is in fact his conscience. That is to say, it is his good side. In this context, when the protagonist defeats his rival in a swordfight, he also kills his conscious, and the narrator alludes to this fatal moment in the introduction of the tale: "I would not, if I could, here or to-day, embody a record of my later years of unspeakable misery, and unpardonable crime. This epoch—these later years—took unto themselves a sudden elevation in turpitude, whose origin alone it is my present purpose to assign" (*Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe* 2:426). The narrator soon after relates the following: "From comparatively trivial wickedness I passed, with the stride of a giant, into more than the enormities of an Elah-Gabalus" (2:426-7). He then says that "death approaches" and calls for the "sympathy," nearly the "pity" of other men (2:427). We can assume from what the narrator here relates that he may be awaiting execution for crimes he has committed, crimes which have only been made possible because of the murdering of his conscience, an event which this tale will narrate, will lead up to. The murder of the narrator's conscience is indeed the focal point of the entire tale, an event that takes place in the last five paragraphs. Given the fact that the narrator is speaking of the murder of his conscience, long after the murder took place, we are immediately struck with the similarity of this set-up to that of "The Cask of Amontillado," where we have another protagonist who, in that case, has walled up a friend, or even his better self, Fortunato. In the case of "William Wilson," of course, the second William Wilson is indeed represented as the "double" of the first William Wilson, the narrator, while Montresor and Fortunato are at least

physically, individual beings. But the situation is certainly not that clear cut, because, while the two characters of "The Cask of Amontillado" are individual beings, they may nonetheless share a common bond, be it symbolic, spiritual, or intellectual. They do appear to be two symbolic halves of the same individual, an individual who has, as in the case of "William Wilson," killed his conscience long ago, walled it up, but on his deathbed, he has feelings of remorse, or perhaps not—he merely takes pleasure in relating his adventures as a young man. The ending of that tale is ambiguous, but so is the ending of "William Wilson." The last couple of paragraphs problematize things in the latter tale. In Montresor's world, we do believe that Fortunato is an actual individual, who may be symbolic of Montresor's better half, but still, he is an individual, as is Montresor. In Wilson's case, while reading the tale (at least until the dénouement), one also gets the impression that the second Wilson, while being symbolic of the first Wilson's better half, is still a distinct personality.

The conclusion of the tale clouds things. After Wilson has run his opponent through with the sword, someone is heard trying to open the door of the room, and Wilson runs to secure the latch; when he turns around, however, a material change has occurred in the room itself. Let us refresh our memories: "A large mirror,—so at first it seemed to me in my confusion—now stood where none had been perceptible before; and, as I stepped up to it in extremity of terror, mine own image, but with features all pale and dabbled in blood, advanced to meet me with a feeble and tottering gait" (2:447-8). In some bizarre way, a mirror has materialized in the room, and apparently, the first Wilson now sees his own image in that mirror, and realizes that he has (given the evidence of the blood) committed suicide, but the tale would then be an impossibility, since its narration has occurred in an otherworldly realm; this would be the most unusual interpretation. The more acceptable conclusion would be to say that the blood on the first Wilson, rather than being representative of suicide, is merely symbolic of the fact that he has liquidated his conscious. The third interpretation, one which I have never come across, but myself advance here, is that the second Wilson has walked up to the mirror, the first Wilson has followed from behind, and peers over the shoulder of the second into the mirror, to see the reflection of the second Wilson, and not of him-

self. This is a rather clumsy interpretation, and perhaps unnecessarily complicated, but it would allow us to still believe that the second Wilson is indeed an actual, physical being, and not merely a symbolic extension of the first Wilson. The fourth interpretation which is more acceptable would dismiss the presence of the mirror entirely, because the first Wilson himself said that a mirror appeared in the room in his "confusion." He could be merely hallucinating, and has mistaken the second, dying Wilson for an actual mirror, because they now face each other and look so much alike. The first interpretation, which concludes that Wilson has committed suicide, and the second interpretation, that he has killed his conscience, are symbolic readings, at least the second one is; according to the first reading, that the tale finishes in suicide and the narrator speaks with a dead voice, it makes no difference whether the narrator possessed or lacked a conscience in real life, because he never had the chance to commit more serious crimes than getting drunk, and cheating at a game of cards. I will therefore dismiss that interpretation entirely.

The second interpretation would therefore be the most common one, that the narrator, Wilson, relates an event that occurred when he was a young man, when he chose to kill his conscience. This seems to be the interpretation that Edward H. Davidson is advancing in his *Poe: A Critical Study*, especially when he says that "William Wilson is the clever man of the world who, however, in order to succeed in the world, must destroy an essential part of himself, his soul or spirit," and especially when he says that "the central problem of 'William Wilson' is the nature of self-identity" (199). But Davidson does not remain solely within the context of the second interpretation of the tale that I advanced, because his comments also seem to overlap with what I said in my third and fourth interpretations, which allow the second Wilson to be symbolic of the first Wilson's conscience, but which also allow the second Wilson to exist as an actual individual, rather than a mere, symbolic extension of the first, especially when the first Wilson says the following near the end of the story: "Not a thread in all his raiment—not a line in all the marked and singular lineaments of his face which was not, even in the most absolute identity, *mine own*" (2:448)! Davidson overlaps with this proposal when he advances that "the whispering voice of another boy also named William Wilson is not really a moral conscience (for conscience depends on some

spiritual determinant in order to have any force at all) but is merely another being in the moral wilderness of Wilson's life. He [Wilson] is his own moral arbiter in a world wherein the only criterion is success; for no action of Wilson, not the cheating at cards nor even the attempted seduction of the Duke di Broglio's wife, is really bad; it is simply a failure in some materialistic ordering of the world which rewards success and punishes failure" (199-200). In this context, where the universe itself is peculiar, the second Wilson, who has the same name, appearance, and birthdate as the first, is merely a coincidence, and a very rare one at that. This second Wilson is luckily going to the same school as the first Wilson, and luckily meets up with him on several occasions throughout his life, and thus, has several chances to try and "reform" the first Wilson, to turn him away from the life which he leads. This does not mean that the second Wilson does not stand in as the double of the first Wilson, but it may mean that his role as a double is not as pure, as symbolic as we wish it to be. The second Wilson is thus, in psychoanalytic terms, closer to the *alter ego* (who can be a physical companion) than to the pure figure of the double (as a psychic projection).

Marie Bonaparte, in her psychoanalytic interpretation of Poe's works, is more detailed than I have been in explaining this; she mentions first that the double in "William Wilson" is rather surprising, because in all other instances that are found in world literature, "the double is most often worse than his original," and, among her examples, she cites *The Student of Prague*, where the double "kills the adversary the student has promised to spare," Dostoyevsky's *Double*, where Golyadkin's double "robs him unscrupulously of his post and his Clara, and finally gets him shut up as mad, while itself triumphing in its evil," and Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, "in which the double so vividly embodies the hero's worst instincts" (554). Bonaparte explains this peculiarity of "William Wilson" by saying that in the other, more common examples, where the double is more evil than the protagonist, "the *ego* [internal moral code] allies itself with the *super-ego* [external, social moral code] and projects its worst drives outwards upon a wicked double who represents temptation [and embodies the *id*, the primitive/primal instinct]," whereas in the case of Poe's tale, which Bonaparte designates the "later form," "the *ego* joins forces with the *id* and flaunts its wickedness, in which case it is the fatal double which embodies the *super-ego*,"

and she also cites the example of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as belonging to this second, rarer camp, because when "Dorian Gray abandons himself to every vice, it is only his portrait that bears the stigmata of condemnation" (554-5). I am perhaps being too detailed here, by citing Bonaparte, for there are general overlaps between the double and the *alter ego*, but nonetheless, Davidson's comments on the tale demonstrate the ambiguous line between the two phenomena, an ambiguity that is to be found in the tale itself, as I have said.

Davidson exposes a profound thing when juxtaposing Wilson's tale to Roderick Usher's world of fear and hypochondria, saying that "Usher saw around him the infinite interrelations of the self and the world outside; he lived in such terror that his private mind-being might by destroyed that he created the outer protective shell or the House. Wilson, on the other hand, is the Romantic individualist for whom the world is nothing but the externalization of the self: at any instant what the self wills the world must become..." (201). This is a rather interesting comment, for it brings a larger literary-historical dimension into our opinion of "William Wilson" and the figure of the double. Davidson has juxtaposed Wilson to Usher, arguing that Usher fears the dissolution, the falling apart of his identity, and thus remains within the walls of his house, believing that they will secure him from the larger world, historical milieu, intertext, whatever we wish to call it, that exists beyond the walls. In this way, we can easily read Usher as one of the clearest examples in literature of the Biedermeier hypochondriac, as I mentioned once before: "Biedermeier culture was an age of hypochondria: that is, of the light chronic ailment produced or maintained by the imagination" (Nemoianu 11). In contrast to Usher's need for closure and homeliness, Wilson, as Davidson argues, is the high Romantic individualist for whom the world, nature, is a projection of his own desires and needs; this attitude, of course, is quite similar to the organic unity which we can detect in the work of Coleridge, where the imagination can unify things and solve problems, and in the work of the early Wordsworth, where childhood is represented as an ideal stage. We can also detect such things in Friedrich Schlegel's theories of Romantic Irony and the musings of Hegel, where opposites can be united through a series of dialectical maneuvers (qtd. in Nemoianu 9). In light of what has been said so far, we can almost read "William Wilson" as

being a parody of the high Romantic aesthetic, because in his need to seek inspiration from the natural world, as the early Romantics did, Wilson becomes much too natural, becoming one with the beasts. If we take the tale more seriously, and read the theme in an obvious way, then Wilson becomes a clear example of the high Romantic aesthetic, who therefore tries to resolve things through a Hegelian dialectic of sorts, by having the second Wilson enter his life from time to time, in a prolonged balancing act that, however progressive it may appear, will surely fail, and has to fail owing to the paradoxical nature of the high Romantic aesthetic. Wilson's life may be enacting the mechanics of dialectical thinking, since he has a better double, the second Wilson, but that dialectic cannot solve anything for the first Wilson because as a fervent believer in individuality (as a high Romantic), he cannot allow the second Wilson to modify that need for individuality, to act as a check on its pathological possibilities, and thus, the dialectical nature of Wilson's life (of the balancing act that the second Wilson brings in) is not compatible with the individualistic origin of that dialectic, with the first Wilson. Or, to put it in more literary-historical terms, the Hegelian dialectic, and Friedrich Schlegel's idea of Romantic Irony, while being products of Romanticism, cannot resolve the inconsistencies and paradoxes that result from the high Romantic aesthetic (the French Revolution, the Reign of Terror, the Marquis de Sade, etc.). But this failure, on Wilson's part, pushes Poe's tale towards a Biedermeier paradigm once again. Nemoianu, arguing against Harold Segel's interpretation of Zygmunt Krasinski's *The Undivine Comedy* (1835) as being permeated with a "Hegelian triadic nature," offers a comment that might equally well be applied to "William Wilson": "The third part, synthesis, is altogether missing. What we have may be described either as irreconcilable confrontation between two universal principles (good versus evil, structure versus chaos) or as an inverse evolutionary ladder—gradual victory of the featureless mass over organized, individualized humankind, gradual withdrawal" (158).

While it is easy to read Poe's "William Wilson" as an excellent example of the Doppelgänger tale, it is much more difficult to say, as it is with most of Poe's work, whether the theme should be taken seriously, where we read Wilson and his interaction with the second Wilson as an example of the high Romantic dialectic, or whether the theme should be read in a parodic way,

where Wilson and his double are caricatures of Romantic literature. The main problem, which is perhaps typical of Poe, is to be found in the frame of the story; the theme can be a high Romantic one (of the double) or it can be another Biedermeier tale, like "The Fall of the House of Usher." In Usher's case, a conclusion can be more easily drawn because the theme appears to determine the meaning of the tale while its frame is fixed, whereas in Wilson's case, the theme is fixed while the frame determines the tale's meaning. In this way, we can at least agree on the fact that the theme of "William Wilson" is the double, and there are obvious dialectical mechanics in the tale to prove this, which a double inevitably brings in, in this case between the first and second Wilson.

Part of the reason why it is difficult to put the figure of the double in "William Wilson" within a larger literary-historical context is because, for Palmer Cobb at least, in his *The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe*, Poe's tale appears derivative of Hoffmann's *Elixiere des Teufels* (31). Cobb's main point is that in both stories, the main idea is the "simple one of the contention of two inimical forces in a man's soul; the evil and the good, struggling for supremacy and final victory....The atmosphere of mystery thus created works an effect of terror, as, in the successive stages of the development of the story, the hero at some critical point of the narrative is confronted by his double. This in general is the basic idea which Poe has borrowed from Hoffmann" (36). Cobb does however admit that "Poe's story, as compared with that of Hoffmann, is greatly reduced and constructed with infinitely more simplicity" (34). More importantly, Cobb realizes that in Poe's story, as Bonaparte also found out, the principle of the double is inverted, since the second William Wilson "is an agent of the good," while in Hoffmann's work, "Medardus's double, Viktorin, is the personified incorporated principle of evil" (42). This last assessment once again gives Poe's tale the privilege of being a more peculiar example of the Doppelgänger, because of this rare inversion of the double figure, so that the evil is enacted by the protagonist himself, or rather, by the antagonist, because such an inversion allows us to read the second William Wilson as being the protagonist, even though one would initially assume that the protagonist is tied to the narrative voice, is one with that voice. The inversion which is enacted in Poe's tale therefore raises other, more meta-literary questions than are raised at the merely thematic level,

since the figure of the double can be potentially tripled, quadrupled, and so on (whereby it would no longer be a figure of the double, but an analogy to intertext), and more importantly, the unity of the narrative voice is itself destabilized because the narrator appears to struggle with the second Wilson's "whisper" for authority, at least until the conclusion of the tale. Cobb in fact cites several times in his argument the peculiar whisper of the second Wilson, and perceptively says that by incorporating pieces of Hoffmann's tale (or tales) but by modifying them greatly, Poe heightens the already present ambiguity by making the "whisper and correspondence of voice play a much larger and more effective role in his story" (44-5). Cobb, while arguing for the influence of Hoffmann's tale on Poe's tale, is nonetheless in basic agreement with my own comments on "William Wilson," that however many ambiguities may be present, the theme is certainly that of the double figure. And Poe, I would add, as Cobb himself has noted, characterizes the double as having a "whispering" voice and also as being "an exact imitation" in physical appearance of the first Wilson (at least until the conclusion of the tale, when the narrator says that the double's identity is not his own) (34). I have spoken of how the inversion of the double figure in "William Wilson" makes it appear that the tale raises meta-literary questions, regarding the validity and multiplicity of the narrator, and the potential multiplicity (infinite doubling) of the second Wilson's role, but such meta- or inter-literary questions are also raised by the peculiar whisper of the second Wilson, a whisper that cannot be repaired into a full voice, and that Cobb is so fascinated by, possibly for its "Byronic intensity," a phrase Daniel Hoffman uses to describe the tale: "Indeed the shadow of Byron tinges this tale ["William Wilson"], for, as Arthur Hobson Quinn points out, Poe drew upon Irving's sketch 'An Unwritten Account of Lord Byron' (published in 1836) in its design" (Hoffman 214).

Hillel Schwartz, in his *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles*, mentions very briefly how those "who have raged most against plagiarism have tended also and ironically to make the most of it" (311). Among the examples which Schwartz cites are William Warburton, who "in 1762 decried thefts of literary property but burgled from Milton the concluding paragraph of an essay on miracles," Coleridge, who "rabidly charged others with theft, but his

own perpetual plagiary he considered a form of spirit possession," and Poe, who believed that "Howe's Masquerade" by Hawthorne was a free borrowing of his own "William Wilson," even though Hawthorne's tale was published a year earlier, in 1838, and so, Poe perversely insinuates the covering-up of plagiarism into the tale itself, by having Wilson say of his double, *"and his singular whisper, it grew the very echo of my own"* (qtd. in Schwartz 311). This would certainly explain why the second Wilson, if representing "Howe's Masquerade," also represents the conscience of the first Wilson, while the first Wilson is the inversion of a plagiarism, whereby he is the more evil of the two characters. In this way, it is the first Wilson who is derivative of the second Wilson, "one" being derivative of "two" since the reality of the tale is inverted, and since Hawthorne's tale was published a year before Poe's, but is within "William Wilson" insinuated as having come later, as being a duplicate, a double. Once again, such a perversion raises serious meta- and inter-literary questions in Poe's tale, since the authority and canonicity of narrative voices and of literary pieces is being inverted, substituted, duplicated, and destabilized. Or, as Schwartz says, "again and again, plagiarism has surfaced precisely where doubling and repetition have been at issue" (311).

In "I Think, but Am Not: The Nightmare of William Wilson," Nancy Berkowitz Bate also touches upon the nuances that are present in Poe's tale. She interprets the tale in a Borgesian fashion, suggesting that its dreamscape, its surreal quality is a parody of Cartesian thinking: "While it is usually presumed that Wilson's double is a 'spectre,' I propose a reading of the tale as a dream narrative in which the narrator, not his double, is the spectre—a dream persona, doomed to inhabit the fictive world of which his double dreams. With his first-person dream narrative, Poe casts doubt upon Descartes's famous axiom: 'I think, therefore I am.' William Wilson thinks, but is not" (27). Such an interpretation, like the failure of Hegelian, dialectical thinking in the tale, may once again be pushing Poe's "William Wilson" toward a Biedermeier paradigm, if we consider that Descartes' famous axiom is one of the foundations of high Romantic thinking, and is therefore being parodied here. Bate believes that it is being parodied, and that there is evidence for this in the text:

> ...Poe puns on Descartes's name, which (when divided) can be translated "some cards," by depicting Wilson playing cards on more than one occasion. This trope enables Poe to relish the irony of placing *des cartes* in the hands of a phantom whose story disproves Descartes's axiom. Poe takes the wordplay further by having Wilson play the card game *écarté*...*Écarté* is derived, like "Descartes," from the root *carte*, or card. *Écarté* means "discard," and with his story Poe discards Cartesian logic and the hegemony of Cartesian analysis over what the narrator has labeled the "*siecle de fer*"...the century or epoch of iron, also called the Age of Reason. (29)

The main points to remember, as we go on to V. F. Odoyevsky's tale, are that the figure of the double is certainly present in Poe's tale, and is used for peculiarly derivative purposes, in both a thematic and more meta-literary way. The inversion of the two Wilsons, so that the second one appears better than the first, so that the first appears imitative of the second (and not the other way around), implies on a thematic level that the tale is representative of the high Romantic aesthetic but that it can also be parodic of that aesthetic, because the presence of doubling can be used for less-than-ideal purposes, to substitute or to coat things of an undesirable nature with the garb of sanction and primacy, as with the first Wilson, who is set up as the protagonist and hero of this tale. On a more meta-literary level, what Poe's problematizing of the principle of doubling does in "William Wilson" is to question the boundaries between authentic and falsified texts, between original works of art and forgeries (some of which may look better than the original), and between canonical and non-canonical texts, and fundamentally, between text and non-text. Such questions are implicitly raised by the agonies which the first Wilson goes through as he attempts to deny that he is derivative of the second Wilson, and eventually, for better or worse, he succeeds, because he destroys the original Wilson, if we equate the notion of the ideal with the original Wilson (who is in this case number two). However, when the first Wilson destroys the second Wilson, he then becomes the original and real Wilson, the most peculiar thing being that we can still find a moral in all of this perversity—reckless originality is just as bad as plagiarism.

Simon Karlinsky says in his article, "A Hollow Shape: The Philosophical Tales of Prince Vladimir Odoevsky," that Odoyevsky's tale "A City Without a Name" is one of his anti-utopias which "takes up the ideas of Jeremy Bentham about the uses of enlightened self-interest. The imaginary country of Benthamia bases its social structure on this principle. At first it reaches a degree of prosperity, but gradually it reverts to savagery and perishes" (180). Charles E. Passage

says that "*The City Without a Name*...is concerned with a future time when disaster has wrecked a 'city without a name' that had been founded by Jeremy Bentham and which had existed solely according to the principle of utility....the topic is wholly alien to [E. T. A.] Hoffmann" (105). More importantly, Karlinsky mentions this tale's place in the larger context of nineteenth-century Russian literature:

> ...[the same problem is here that is] taken up in the celebrated literary debate in the 1860s between Chernyshevsky and Dostoevsky. In his inept but influential novel *What Is to Be Done?*, Chernyshevsky championed the cause of the nineteenth-century utilitarian ethic and Dostoevsky's riposte was expressed in his *Notes From the Underground*. But the first shot in this debate was already fired decades earlier by Odoevsky in his "A City Without a Name," and it is sad how little Russian nineteenth-century criticism has been able to cope with this significant story. (181)

The interesting thing about this tale, particularly when we compare it to Poe's "William Wilson," is that a different figure, rather than a psychological and/or physical double, is present here. For lack of a better term, I will call the mysterious character in Odoyevsky's tale a *spectator* figure, because he narrates the terrible events which his nation experienced, after institutionalizing Bentham's rules, but he never gives more evidence regarding his own identity, and he is never really a physical character within the story that he himself narrates. I have thus called him a spectator, because while being an observer of certain events, and later, a narrator of them, he is not as an individual (with a name) caught up and destroyed by those events, whereas, if we remember, in Poe's tale, the first Wilson is indeed a part and parcel of the story which he narrates, since the sequence of events will indeed have a personal impact on his own nature as well (when he kills his double, who is also named). As such, one of the main differences between the double and spectator figures appears, for now, to be as follows: the double is named and is representative of personal and psychological events, while the spectator is unnamed and is representative of collective and sociological events.

Odoyevsky's tale begins when a carriage cannot make it up a steep road, and it stops, so that the travellers get out. Then, one of the nameless travellers says: "Only then did we notice at the top of an almost inaccessible rock something resembling a man. This specter, in a black cloak, sat motionless among the heaps of stone in deep silence. Coming nearer to the rock, we wondered

how this being could climb the almost bare, sheer walls to the top" (*Russian Nights* 101). This mysterious figure has already been clothed in a near-supernatural light, because he is called a "specter" and has somehow managed to climb the "bare, sheer walls to the top." The description becomes even more peculiar when this stranger begins narrating his story to the travellers, for he says the following, regarding his fallen nation: "My unfortunate fatherland! I foresaw your fall, I moaned at your crossroad: you did not hear my moaning...and I was destined to survive you" (102). This statement, that the mysterious figure has "foreseen" the fall of his nation, "moaned" at its "crossroad," and was "destined" to survive it, becomes even more bizarre when we realize that a great length of time separates the rise and fall of this Benthamite civilization that he is describing. He begins his story by saying that "a long, long time ago, in the eighteenth century, the minds of all people were excited by theories of social order" (103), then, a few paragraphs later, after the Benthamite colony has been established on a remote island, he says that "many long years passed. Nothing disturbed the peace and delights of the happy island" (105). Later, he says that "many long years passed again. Not far away from us there settled another colony, likewise on an uninhabited island" (106). And later we get the following: "Many long years passed again. Shortly after we subdued our neighbors, we met others whose subjugation was not quite so convenient" (107). After the Benthamite state breaks into two factions, the rationalists and idealists, the figure says that "many years passed in these external and internecine wars, which would now stop for a while, now flare up again with added bitterness" (109), and finally, several pages later, after the civilization is ravaged by natural disasters, he says: "Several centuries passed. Merchants were followed by craftsmen" (112). It is by now obvious that this Benthamite nation has lasted for at least three or four centuries, judging from the comments which the mysterious figure makes, so, if it is at all possible that this spectator figure was there all along, from the founding of the nation to its fall, then he too is at least a few centuries old.

According to such an interpretation, we then have to equate the spectator figure definitively with the realm of the supernatural, otherworldly, or perhaps the superhuman. This figure, as opposed to the double figure in Poe's tale, can in no way be a regular human. In the case of Wil-

liam Wilson's life, as I concluded, we can believe that an actual second Wilson existed, but that this Wilson was also symbolic of the first Wilson, of his better self; the two interpretations, one psychological and the other physical/mimetic, could exist side by side. In the case of Odoyevsky's spectator figure, we cannot arrive at such a compromise in interpretation because of the collective, perhaps even apocalyptic stature of this figure; he is either a physical person, whereby he is some sort of god, or genetic anomaly, or he is merely a symbolic figure in the text and in no way real, except in the imagination of the person who gets out of the carriage and believes that he sees a man standing on top of the wall of rock. In other words, because of the overwhelming, all-encompassing presence of the spectator figure, we cannot reconcile two views and say that he is both real and symbolic of the agonies of his fallen civilization. In Wilson's case, because of the personal and psychological nature of the double figure, we could take the second Wilson for an actual person, but we could also take him for a symbolic link to the first Wilson; he can be two things at the same time. The spectator figure, in contrast, because of his perhaps overblown nature, can only be one thing, that is to say, cannot juggle identities. He is either a god-like being, or a ghost, or an environmental anomaly, which the stranded travellers encounter, or he is merely a figment of one of the traveller's imaginations, because they are stranded in a desolate part of the country, and their minds thus plays games with them. According to the evidence of the tale itself, it seems that this figure should be taken as an actual, supernatural manifestation, rather than a hallucination, because he himself says to the travellers that when the Benthamite nation was founded, "the mountain on which we now are was surrounded on all sides by the sea. I still remember the sails of our ships unfurled in the harbor" (104). The fact that this figure has been witness to natural erosion and great climactic change is the clearest evidence for his supernatural origin (climactic change of this order, which transforms islands into mountains, takes tens of thousands of years). Even more proof of his supernatural origins can be found in the fact that he does not seem to age: "The appearance of the stranger was stern and majestic: his big black eyes burned in deep hollows; his eyebrows were tilted like those of a man accustomed to thinking incessantly; the stature

of the stranger seemed even more majestic because of the black cloak which gracefully flowed from his left shoulder and down to the ground" (102).

The greatest difference between the double and spectator figures, according to what I have so far said, would be the respective natures of the two figures. The second Wilson in Poe's story, whether he is a psychic projection of the first Wilson or a real person, still seems to derive his significance from the main Wilson, that is to say, the only reason the second Wilson has physical presence and psychological power is because the first Wilson finds significance in his double, a significance that he transcribes onto the second Wilson and thereby makes him relevant to his own life, makes him a conditioner of his own milieu (the entire process is circular, closed, personal, and psychological). In the case of Odoyevsky's tale, the spectator figure does not have significance transcribed onto him through the events that constitute the tale of a civilization which he narrates, but rather, the reverse happens; significance emanates from the spectator figure himself, who transcribes a collective and largely historical importance to the events which he narrates (the entire process being linear, open, impersonal, and sociological). The fundamental difference between the spectator and double figures is therefore as follows: the double is derivative and therefore personal and psychological, even though it may be physical, while the spectator is self-sustaining and therefore collective and inevitably physical, but only supernaturally so (within the tale) because there is no other way to account for the spectator's paradoxical presence except to say that it is a *collective physicality*.

My last comment, on the collective physicality of the spectator figure, leads me now to briefly discuss the similarities between Poe's and Odoyevsky's two tales, because there appear to be subtle overlaps and links. The collectivity of the spectator, which is supposedly physical and yet not physically graspable like a real person, like the second Wilson, is most similar to the high Romantic, Hegelian notion of the spirit of an age (which has historical and idealistic connotations, among other things). In this way, the make-up, the nature of the spectator figure, or rather, the principle behind its appearance, still appears to be a high Romantic, idealistic one, because by narrating the rise and fall of his Benthamite civilization, the spectator is also recounting, or more spe-

cifically, ascribing the spirit of an age to that age, which is mercantilist, Benthamite, practical, and so on. Odoyevsky's tale is thus similar to Poe's "William Wilson" because in that work, as I described when dealing with the story, the presence of the double and more importantly, the dialectical, Hegelian-like mechanics of Wilson's life, where a thesis (Wilson one's endeavors) leads to an antithesis (Wilson two's endeavors) and finally to a synthetic resolution and/or failure (the murder of Wilson two), is evidence that the theme deals, in some way at least, with the high Romantic aesthetic, as defined by Coleridge, the early Wordsworth, the Schlegels, Tieck, Novalis, etc. These, then, are the most obvious similarities between the two tales.

The less-than-obvious similarities are always more difficult to detect, especially if they end up being differences. What I am working towards with such an obtuse statement is the possible and potential difference between high Romanticism and the Biedermeier aesthetic, and the possible inscription of these two *similar yet different* period styles within the two tales that I have been discussing. I have already spoken of how in Poe's tale, while the theme is apparently fixed (of the Doppelgänger), the narrative frame may be parodic of this theme, precisely because the resolution of the Hegelian dialectic is disastrous, ending in the murder of a person and the extinction of the first Wilson's conscience. In this way, a parodic frame would be just enough to destabilize the high Romantic aesthetic which comprises the theme of the story, and it would be just enough for us to say that Poe's tale of the double, which Marie Bonaparte considers peculiar for other reasons, is a Biedermeier tale of the double (a very rare thing indeed). But, once again, I cannot say anything definitive on this topic, because, if we do not read the tale as a parody of the Doppelgänger, then all is well, and a decidedly Romantic tale has been written by Poe. Nonetheless, the potential is certainly there that we as readers interpret the story as being a parody of the Doppelgänger, and therefore a Biedermeier tale. I believe that this potential is there because while the theme of Poe's story is fixed, situated within a Romantic paradigm, the frame is variable, subject to serious or parodic readings; in that case, we have to rely on the parodic frame of the story to make a case for Biedermeier aesthetics, as I said, but this is a tentative argument at best.

In the case of Odoyevsky's tale, things appear to be more clear cut, so to speak, because the frame is fixed, as in the case of Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," which outlines the dissolution of a Biedermeier hypochondriac. In Odoyevsky's tale, while the theme is certainly derived from the high Romantic notion of the spirit of an age, among other things, the theme also makes it explicit that the story is destabilizing such lofty, unifying notions because the spectator figure, who appears more than human, is undermined in his authorial endeavor to give us a history of the Benthamite civilization that he is describing. Why do I say that he is being undermined, and explicitly so? There are two, in fact, three points in the tale that collapse his presence as a meta-entity. The first point is subtle, and occurs right after the stranded travellers have met this mysterious figure; we remember that one of the travellers could not explain how this figure managed to get on top of the flat wall of rock on which he stands (that it was physically impossible). The coachdriver undermined the supernatural feel of that description by pointing it out to the travellers that there was "a narrow stairway which led to the top" (101). This pointing out of the stairway comically undercuts the initial, supernatural aura with which the travellers describe the mysterious figure as he stands on top of the rock. I am even tempted to read the image of the stranger on a rock, and the comical pointing out of a stairway that leads to the top, as a fine caricature of that famous painting of high Romanticism, by Caspar David Friedrich, entitled "The Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog" (1818). This would then be the first evidence of a Biedermeier tendency within Odoyevsky's tale, and a more obvious example than can be encountered anywhere in Poe's story of the double.

The second point where the Romantic paradigm seems to be destabilized occurs within the narrative of the spectator figure himself, when he is describing the pleasures and perils of the Benthamite colony. This second example is found near the end of his narration, right after natural disasters have devastated the remaining parts of the once thriving civilization:

> "At that time in the square of one of the cities of our state there appeared a pale man, his hair in disorder, wearing a funereal cloak. 'Woe,' he shouted covering his head with ashes. 'Woe to you, country of disgrace; you massacred your prophets, and your prophets became silent!...Do you think that your marble palaces, luxurious clothing, heaps of gold, crowds of slaves, your hypocrisy and fraud are going to save you?...I, the last of your prophets, implore you: abandon bribery and gold, lies and dishonor; bring back to life your thoughts of the mind

> and your feelings of the heart;...my words smite your ears in vain: you will not repent—I curse you!'...Police drove off the crowd of curious people and brought the unfortunate man to an insane asylum." (111-2)

Here we have another spectator figure, a prophet, like the figure who narrates the story. He is apparently the last of the doomed civilization's prophets, whereas the spectator who narrates most of the story may have been the first, since he apparently remembers the founding of the colony, or more interestingly, the prophet who comes up briefly in the spectator figure's tale could in fact be the spectator figure himself, if we maintain that he is of supernatural origins, and is thus ageless. But a destabilization of his prophetic voice is still occurring, and on a very subtle level, for two reasons. The first reason I would say the spectator's voice is being destabilized, caricatured, parodied, etc., is because he pops up briefly in his own narrative to imitate himself, so to speak, in the sense that he offers didactic, moral advice in the tale, and he moralizes while he is narrating the tale as well; in this way, at the point that he candidly mentions himself in the tale, his narrative voice becomes double-edged, double-sided, not for hypocritical reasons, but simply because it is structurally duplicated via the framing effect of the spectator's tale, that frames another spectator figure (probably himself, which is even more redundant). And we should remember that the spectator's tale is itself framed within the larger frame of Odoyevsky's tale itself, that begins with a description of a group of stranded travellers, and ends with the inquiries of those travellers that continue after the spectator's tale of the Benthamite colony ends. In this way, there is a triple framing occurring within the tale, and a double framing of the spectator figure, which slyly contaminates the theme of the story further, so that we can even read it as being a *Doppelgänger of spectator figures*, rather than of traditional doubles as in Poe's tale. In this way, Odoyevsky's tale could be destabilizing the supernatural presence of the spectator figure, but it could also be destabilizing the ambiguous boundary which exists between spectatorial tales, like this one, and true Doppelgänger tales. The destabilization could thus be both thematic and meta-literary, which is what I said of Poe's tale as well, but, let us remember, in Odoyevsky's case, this destabilization appears much more obvious, and thus, the tale appears a more decided exercise in Biedermeier aesthetics.

The second, even more obvious reason why the spectator figure is being destabilized is because the other spectator/prophet figure, in his tale, is taken to an "insane asylum."

The third and final point at which the spectator figure appears to be caricatured is in the concluding paragraph of the story, where the travellers ask an innkeeper about the identity of the mysterious person who talked to them, and the innkeeper finishes the narrative by saying that this person "preached" at meetings but eventually began to accuse everyone of immorality, dishonesty, "and other similar reprehensible things," whereupon they "showed the orator to the door. Apparently that stung him to the quick; he became insane, and now he wanders from place to place, stops passersby and preaches to them the excerpts of the sermon he had composed for us" (114). Such a conclusion enacts the most severe destabilization of the spectator figure. In fact, this is no longer a mere destabilization, but rather, a larger distortion of the initial, supernatural austerity of that figure, which we encountered at the very beginning of the tale, when one of the travellers described this figure as he stood high above on a rock; if this figure is insane, then he could have invented the entire tale about the Benthamite colony, and this would explain his delusions of immortality, which greet us at the opening of the tale as a supernatural aura. Specifically, then, we can interpret Odoyevsky's tale as at least being a caricature or parody of the initial, Romantic portrayal of such a mysterious figure, that opens the narrative, and that appears in Caspar David Friedrich's famous painting. The conclusion of "A City Without a Name" cements the story as a rather solid example of the Biedermeier aesthetic, particularly when we realize how the theme has changed from the beginning which is typically Romantic, when stranded travellers encounter a stranger, to the dénouement which seems like something out of a Dostoyevskian novel, where people might discuss the fate of deranged individuals with innkeepers. The more obviously Biedermeier atmosphere of Odoyevsky's tale (in comparison to Poe's) is perhaps clarified further when we look to some extratextual evidence. Neil Cornwell, in *The life, times and milieu of V. F. Odoyevsky 1804-1869*, mentions an important point, that Odoyevsky's Romantic outlook changed in subtle ways after the 1820s, perhaps owing to the failure of the Decembrist revolt of 1825, and it is in this later mood that such anti-utopian tales as "A City Without a Name" were written:

> Odoyevsky's philosophical writings can be seen to fall into two main periods. The first, on which his purely philosophical significance is often judged, extends over most of the decade of the 1820s, which is usually assumed to be Odoyevsky's overtly Schellingian period....The second period, extending through the 1830s and even up to the mid to late 1840s, which may be described as 'post-Schellingian' (at least to the extent that a considerable variety of subsidiary influences can also be seen brought to bear), is one in which pure philosophy became more concertedly subordinated in Odoyevsky's work to applied romantic aesthetics;.... (75-6)

Alexander Levitsky, speaking of another of Odoyevsky's tales, the science-fiction piece, "The Year 4338," suggests that on the question of "eutopia or dystopia," the text creates an "effect of ambiguity" (72-4). He doesn't necessarily consider such an effect "post-Schellingian" like Cornwell, but properly Schellingian: "For one thing, Odoevskij never understood history in Hegelian terms, but rather in terms of Schlegel and Schelling. Thus, one may safely assume that if Odoevskij planned his trilogy ["The Year 4338"] with reference to Hegel's dialectics, he must have proceeded on an assumption which would reject Hegel's theory, instead of confirming it. Yet, Odoevskij never finished his trilogy [it was published as a fragment] and he refuted Hegel in other works, most notably in the *Russian Nights*..." (73).

While Odoyevsky's tale may tend towards a Biedermeier vision, substituting spectators for doubles and collectivizing experience, experience in the sense of Gadamer's *Erlebnis*, or more specifically, exposing the limitations "of the art of experience and [rehabilitating] allegory" (Gadamer 63), Poe's "William Wilson" is more difficult to place, since doubles and/or ideas of individuality are still at play. Hoffmann's "The Doubles" may help locating Poe's tale in relation to Odoyevsky's "A City Without a Name," but also in relation to Hoffmann's own work. In "The Doubles," Deodatus Schwendy, from Switzerland, is doubled as George Haberland, the painter. What is immediately noticeable in this story is the greater emphasis on supernatural events and powers than in either Poe's or Odoyevsky's tales, because Deodatus' actions are tied up with the ambiguous statements that the wise Gypsy woman offers and with the mysterious voices which surround her: "Phosphorous has been subdued. The kettle gleams in the west! Eagle of the night, fly up to the awakened dreams" (*Selected Writings of E. T. A. Hoffmann* 1:277)! The Gypsy woman attempts reuniting Deodatus with his love, Natalie, but this leads to complications. Besides the main plot, in which doubles are in love with the same woman, Natalie, there is also the subplot of

a more political nature, involving characters such as the good Fürst Remigius, and the rather nasty Graf Hektor von Zelies, who also happens to be the father of Natalie. Such interweaving of plots is certainly not reminiscent of the compactness of "William Wilson," where one plot line is followed to its abrupt resolution. Without going too deeply into the details of the plot (or plots), I want to get to the two main themes of the story, in my opinion: unveiling and reconciliation. The unveiling is rather elaborate, but is intended to sort out most of the confusion of the subplot of the story, bringing things to the surface, offering clarity. Graf Hektor von Zelies is revealed as Fürst Isidor, the good Fürst's evil younger brother, Amadeus Schwendy (father of Deodatus) is revealed as the good Graf von Törny, who disappeared long ago but is now necessary for the tale's resolution since the good Fürst has died of a stroke, Deodatus is revealed as the son of the wise Gypsy woman, who is actually the good Fürst's wife, which in turn exposes Deodatus as the young Fürst, in line for the throne, and the painter George Haberland, Deodatus' double, is revealed as Graf Törny's son, who was switched at birth with Deodatus for reasons of political security (1:307-12).

The second, more significant theme is that of reconciliation. The two doubles, Deodatus and George, now known as young Fürst and young Graf, stare at each other in front of Natalie, and the tension appears to be building toward a dénouement evocative of "William Wilson": "And then they both cried together, 'Choose, Natalie, choose!' Then one said to the other. 'Let's see which one succeeds in getting rid of the doppelgänger—you shall bleed—bleed, if you are not a satanic illusion of Hell'" (1:313)! But things change. Natalie kneels, prays, says "renounce," and Deodatus adds: "It is the angel,...It is the angel of eternal light who is speaking to you" (1:314). A supernatural device has come to the rescue, and the doubles embrace and drop their claims over Von Zelies' (Isidor's) daughter: "Natalie retired to a remote nunnery, becoming Abbess there" (1:314). And so the tale ends, with the Fürst ascending the throne with wreaths, flowers, and trumpets around him. More interestingly, his double, the young Graf Törny, remains a painter, is still known as George Haberland, and wanders "on over the mountains" with his friend Berthold, who says: "Your being a Graf does not bother me, for I know you are and will remain an artist. And the girl you love? She is not a creature of the earth, she does not live in the world, but in you yourself

as the high and pure ideal of your art, which inspires you, which breathes from your works, which is enthroned above the stars" (1:315). It is amazing how Natalie's ethereal nature has so inspired Haberland, but such a nature is particularly amazing when juxtaposed with the materiality of the Duke Di Broglio's young wife in "William Wilson":

> I had indulged more freely than usual in the excesses of the wine-table; and now the suffocating atmosphere of the crowded rooms irritated me beyond endurance. The difficulty, too, of forcing my way through the mazes of the company contributed not a little to the ruffling of my temper; for I was anxiously seeking (let me not say with unworthy motive) the young, the gay, the beautiful wife of the aged and doting Di Broglio. With a too unscrupulous confidence she had previously communicated to me the secret of the costume in which she would be habited, and now, having caught a glimpse of her person, I was hurrying to make my way into her presence. (*Poe* 2:446)

If I am to say anything here, it is that Poe's description can be read as a Biedermeier reduction of the transcendental scene in Hoffmann's work. András Imre Sándor indirectly explains the compromising, if somewhat synthetic resolution of Hoffmann's "The Doubles" (via the Natalie-angel scene) by saying that even though Hoffmann "is indeed generally regarded as a dualist,...he was critical toward dualists and this may serve as a warning that either it is wrong to call him one or else that there are two kinds of dualism [Hoffmann's and Poe's, to use the current example]" (135). Sándor elaborates as follows:

> In Hoffmann's view the ego,...is dualistically based....One is the actual ego, analogous to actual reality and the material world [Deodatus Schwendy turned Fürst]; the other is the ideal ego, analogous to poesy and spirit [George Haberland who remains a painter]. Everybody is what he is, but also what he would like to be. It is for this reason that Goethe's Mephistopheles is wrong when he tells Faust that he is (only) what he is. A situation can be called healthy and harmonious and satisfying if the two parts intercommunicate, live in a free interchange, and thus create an ego that is a synthesis. (135-6)

Such a situation, a synthesis of the ego, is made possible by the doubles' renouncing of Natalie (in the physical sense). This synthesis does not occur in Poe's "William Wilson," where egos remain split, trying to defeat each other (pure goodness versus pure evil). Hoffmann's tale, where doubles coexist, explains part of the difficulty in reading Poe's tale, as high Romantic or Biedermeier. The division between egos, made obvious by William Wilson's conflict with his double, seems to indicate a deeper contradiction in the tale. There is a Platonic strain present, through a totalization of the good ego and the negation of organic duality, a gesture which may echo the pathological optimism of an earlier, higher Romanticism, but simultaneously, there is a bizarre inversion of that

Platonic strain when the first Wilson kills the second one, still maintaining Platonism, but now, only in a netherworld, and thereby drastically pushing the tale towards a fragmentary, Biedermeier vision of things, where the darker Wilson is left standing.

Rosenheim, reading Poe in relation to cryptography and the internet, would perhaps not think of this success of the first Wilson as an inverted manifestation of Platonism, but rather, as a vague beginning of parallel universe theories, where the first Wilson is, unusually, in a parallel universe, or more clearly, in a dreamscape, as Bate remarks when reading the tale as a parody of Cartesian thinking (Bate 27). For what it is worth, Rosenheim cites from Sudbery's article, "Quantum Mechanics": "David Albert has shown us how, in the parallel universes interpretation, a Maxwell Demon can beat the Heisenberg principle if Wigner's Friend hands the Demon a 'photograph' of himself in a parallel world. This beating of the Heisenberg limit can only be done by the Demon, not by Wigner's Friend, it is not beyond standard quantum mechanics, but a rigorous consequence of it when Godelian strange loops of 'self-reference' are added" (qtd. in Rosenheim 204-5). Wilson, or should I call him the Maxwell Demon, has apparently beaten the Heisenberg limit, supposedly proven by Wootters and Zurek under the slogan, *a single quantum cannot be cloned*, by adding loops of self-reference, that is to say, by having the good Wilson, Wigner's Friend, hand him "a photograph of himself in a parallel world."

What is most interesting is that András Imre Sándor also mentions Goethe as maintaining such divisions between egos (and universes) via the figure of Mephistopheles, in contrast to Hoffmann's synthesis of egos; among other things, Odoyevsky himself is said to have been influenced by Goethe. Cornwell cites that "the most discussed work" in connection with Odoyevsky "has been Hoffmann's *The Serapion Brothers*," but that Goethe's "*Conversations with German Emigrants* (generally considered a lesser work),...merits much closer comparison [than *Faust* or *Wilhelm Meister*], given both the content and the attention paid by Goethe to the frame situation which, in the words of Swales, explores 'the full thematic implications of a particular kind of narrative constellation,' involving questions (not far removed from Odoevsky's interests) of interpretation and understanding" (*Vladimir Odoevsky and Romantic Poetics* 86-7). In other words, there may be a com-

plex diagonal relationship between Goethean and Schillerian pre-Romanticism and/or Neoclassicism and the Biedermeier, certainly in Odoyevsky's case, but not necessarily in Poe's, the latter being more influenced, I will speculate for the moment, by Alexander Pope, much like Byron, an interesting possibility to be looked at later in the study when dealing with the problematic issue of multiple neoclassicisms, but with caution, of course. Charles E. Passage warns that Russian interpretations of German literature were quite "subjective" at this time: "Eclectic readings in Goethe, for example, gave rise to notions of that writer as partially true and as mutually contradictory as the reports of the seven blind men in the Hindu fable who described the elephant in terms of what portions of that animal's body their hands had touched. Russian scholarship did not strike the proper balance in Goethe-interpretation before mid-century, and by that time Goethe's works were 'history' and no longer touchstones of the inventive imagination" (222). And besides this, the frame-tale character of Faust in *Russian Nights*, while slightly reminiscent of the protagonist of Goethe, "was only a transitional persona" (Cornwell, *The life, times and milieu of V. F. Odoyevsky* 276). Odoyevsky himself says the following about Goethe's main character: "They say that Goethe in *Faust* depicted the suffering of an omniscient man, who has perceived all the powers of nature. But knowledge of nature, which, it may be said in passing, can never perceive the extreme limits, will never produce the feeling of suffering; sadness arises only from the fact that the limits are not perceived" (qtd. in Cornwell 277).

While in Poe's "William Wilson" there is the potential to interpret it as a Biedermeier tale of the Doppelgänger, the case is not easy to solve, but nonetheless greatly clarified when we look at Hoffmann's "The Doubles," which appears to end on a rather Hegelian note, namely, Natalie's unifying transcendentalism. Poe's tale can certainly be read as a caricature or parody of the Hegelian dialectic (thesis, antithesis, synthetic resolution) and of the high Romantic aesthetic in general (which included the Doppelgänger), but in order to do this, to read the tale parodically, we must believe that the narrative frame in some way makes the tale parodic, which might be the case because, as Cobb says in his study, Poe's story is a severe, comical simplification of Hoffmann's *Elixiere des Teufels* (34), but also, I will add, a reworking of the happily synthetic ending of "The

Doubles." I am willing to allow for the possibility that "William Wilson" can be read parodically, but I will also say that the tale comes closer at times to the Romantic aesthetic itself because the mechanics of the theme, the content of the theme, allows and in fact invites a serious interpretation. It is one of those typically Poe-esque things, where the narrative frame is left open, but the theme is usually fixed, thereby inviting the reader's uncertainty. In the case of Odoyevsky's "A City Without a Name," I am willing to say that it is an exemplary moment in the context of a Biedermeier paradigm, because the theme is explicitly post-Romantic, caricaturing and distorting the superhuman presence of the spectator figure through destabilizations that undermine the Romantic, Promethean myth that he appears to embody (reminiscent of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, etc.) and the Hegelian spirit of the age which appears to permeate that figure's story of the Benthamite colony, but is a spirit that is less-than-flattering, being closer to some form of embarrassing historical residue than to a lofty Hegelian idea that requires the presence of history to unfold it.

VI - Artists

Besides the Doppelgänger, the theme of the artist is also important in Romantic literature. Using Hoffmann's "Ritter Gluck" (1809), Poe's "The Oval Portrait" (1842), and Odoyevsky's "The Improvvisatore" (1833), I wish to elaborate on the relative position of these tales in relation to the theme of the artist and/or the aesthetic. An elaboration on the position of each tale will hopefully, in turn, draw a distinction between a high Romantic and a more Biedermeier attitude toward the artist.

András Imre Sándor speaks of Hoffmann's work as follows:

> It would be difficult to find another writer in Germany or outside it who wrote as frequently about artists as did Hoffmann. More than thirty of his sixty-one works of pure fiction—and they include three of his four long tales and both of his novels—have an artist as their central character or occupying a position that is central to the argument of the story. To these one should also add Hoffmann's four longer conversations held, with one exception, by artists, and without exception on art. He seems to have inherited this obsession from Novalis or Friedrich Schlegel;...Hoffmann, however, seems to have inherited a great deal also from Kleist, who, in contrast, wrote about "real" people, not artists....Hoffmann's peculiarity is that he combined these two influences, and in all his significant work he wrote both about "real" people, human conflicts, and at the same time about artists. This is *his* characteristic obsession. (142-3)

Hoffmann's "Ritter Gluck" is a good example of what Sándor says. Kent and Knight speak of this early tale as "the auspicious beginning of Hoffmann's literary career" and of how, "despite its brevity, it is one of Hoffmann's very best tales and contains many elements which reappear again and again in his works" (*Selected Writings of E. T. A. Hoffmann* 1:26-7). I am primarily interested in the story's relation to Poe's and Odoyevsky's artist tales, but nonetheless, it does raise intriguing questions. Kent and Knight elaborate: "We are told in the beginning of the story that what follows took place in 1809; however, we know that the composer [Christoph Willibald] Gluck died in 1787. How could Gluck, according to our standards of reality, find himself in Weber's Café, in Berlin, twenty-two years after his death? Perhaps, one could argue, there is no Gluck; it is the narrator who is insanely imagining that he exists. But Hoffmann convinces us that this man is Gluck, for he tells us as much himself, in the very last line of the story, with the italicized *'I am Ritter Gluck'*" (1:27). A character called Gluck certainly exists in this tale, and Hoffmann seems to be using him

as both an example of the artist (a musician, composer, etc.) and also as a mouthpiece for a theory of art (possibly Hoffmann's own). Already near the beginning of the tale, once the overture to *Iphigenia in Aulis* has been played, some art criticism is exchanged between Gluck and the narrator:

> "I am satisfied with the performance! The orchestra performed very nicely!"
> "And yet," [the narrator] interrupted, "and yet, only the pale outline of a masterpiece that has been composed with vivid colors was presented."
> "Do I judge rightly? You are not a Berliner!"
> "Quite right. I only stay here from time to time."
> "The Burgundy is good. But it is getting cold here."
> "Let's go inside and finish the bottle."
> "A good suggestion. I don't know you; but on the other hand, you don't know me either. We will not ask each other's name; names are sometimes a nuisance. I will drink the Burgundy; it costs me nothing and we are comfortable together and that is enough." (1:52)

As the tale progresses, the character named Gluck relates his artistic inspiration to the narrator, in very lofty language: "For many years I sighed in the kingdom of dreams—there—indeed, there—I sat in a marvelous valley and listened to the flowers singing together. Only a sunflower was silent and sadly bowed her closed calyx to the ground. Invisible bonds drew me to her—she raised her head—the calyx opened and shone toward me from within the eye" (1:54). Near the dénouement, when the narrator goes to Gluck's apartment to hear *Armida*, he finds that things are very peculiar. He observes "a row of beautifully bound books with golden letters: *Orfeo, Armida, Alceste, Iphigenia*, etc.; in brief, [he] saw Gluck's masterpieces standing together" (1:57). However, when Gluck opens one of the books, *Armida*, the narrator is astonished because he sees "music paper, but without a single note written in it" (1:57). Even more surprisingly, the performance goes well, with the narrator turning the empty pages of the book "at the right moments": "...he [Gluck] played marvelously and masterfully, with complete chords, the majestic *tempo di marcia* with which the overture begins, almost completely true to the original....[and later] he sang the final scene of *Armida* with an expression that penetrated my soul....All my fibers trembled—I was beside myself" (1:58).

Hoffmann's concept of the artist is illustrated well by the character Gluck. Sándor, speaking of Hoffmann's notion of art, says that "when Hoffmann wants to introduce the miraculous into everyday life he wants to introduce spirit, truth, poesy. When he speaks of a romantic life or of a life in poesy he means a life in eternal truth and in the highest manifestation of existence....[and further] For Hoffmann, contacting the divine means to contact that which is eternally

present but commonly unnoticed. He wants to come into contact with the higher divine nature which Coleridge called *natura naturans* [the essence, as opposed to mere nature, *natura naturata*]" (165). Interestingly, Sándor adds a footnote to his discussion, that "Schiller had similar views, but Hoffmann is closer to Hölderlin. For Hoffmann had the conviction that higher nature could be experienced in the realm of lower nature, that the supra-terrestrial was accessible in the terrestrial" (204). And thus we get "Ritter Gluck," a tale in which the mysterious character named Gluck experiences this higher nature, which in turn amazes the narrator. As Sándor elaborates, Hoffmann's concept of the artist, in rather Coleridgean fashion, links the divine with the earthly realm, which, I will add, is a high Romantic gesture. It is a gesture that is brought about by Hoffmann's use of the phrase *Wissenschaft und Kunst*, which links two words no longer commonly used together in his era, a linking that implies the importance of the process of creation in which the artist is involved:

> Goethe and Schiller were under the spell of eighteenth-century notions—such as Winckelmann's—when they created and spread the new usage of the term "Kunst": they thought of works of art as creations of beauty. They also wanted, of course, to communicate truth, but never at the expense of beauty....When Hoffmann adds "Wissenschaft" [mediation of truth] and even puts it in the first place, he means that the "Kunst" he has in mind does not serve mere amusement....the situation is fairly clear: art, in his [Hoffmann's] view, serves cognition. (171-2)

Art as cognition, or more simply, art as knowledge, is an idea that is found in Poe's "The Oval Portrait" as well. Here, however, artistic knowledge, which in Hoffmann's case is tied to a divine realm, seems to be reinterpreted. It may be divine, but it may also be monstrous, depending on what side of the *frame* one is located. Mabbott speaks of how "The Oval Portrait," in its final version, "is one of the briefest and best known of the arabesques" (*Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe* 2:659). He also says that "Poe's inspiration was a painting by his friend Robert M. Sully [whose more famous uncle was Thomas Sully], as his granddaughter, Miss Julia Sully of Richmond, has revealed. She wrote that the picture was an oval portrait, two-thirds life-size, of a girl holding in her hand a locket that hung on a ribbon about her bare neck" (2:660). The tale can be read realistically, where the narrator actually discovers a mysterious manuscript and reads from it, but it can also be read as the narrator's hallucination, and this second reading is made possible by the Gothic

setting which opens up the tale:

> The chateau into which my valet had ventured to make forcible entrance, rather than permit me, in my desperately wounded condition, to pass the night in the open air, was one of those piles of commingled gloom and grandeur which have so long frowned among the Apennines, not less in fact than in the fancy of Mrs. Radcliffe....We established ourselves in one of the smallest and least sumptuously furnished apartments. It lay in a remote turret of the building....Its walls were hung with tapestry and bedecked with manifold and multiform armorial trophies, together with an unusually great number of very spirited modern paintings in frames of rich golden arabesque....I bade Pedro to close the heavy shutters of the room—since it was already night—to light the tongues of a tall candelabrum which stood by the head of my bed—and to throw open far and wide the fringed curtains of black velvet which enveloped the bed itself. (2:662-3)

It is quite possible that the narrator hallucinates his discovery of "a small volume which had been found upon the pillow" (2:663) and which criticizes the paintings, but nonetheless, this discovered story raises complex questions about the precise role of the artist.

Paula Kot, in her article, "Painful Erasures: Excising the Wild Eye from 'The Oval Portrait,'" focuses on Poe's treatment of the artist figure and the idea of art in this tale. She ties her argument to an editorial change between the earlier and later versions of the tale, "Life in Death" and "The Oval Portrait," respectively. She says that "in the later draft, Poe excises precisely what in the portrait of the woman 'confounded, subdued and appalled' the narrator: 'I could no longer support the sad meaning smile of the half-parted lips, nor the too real lustre of the wild eye'...Poe's erasure of the woman's 'sad meaning smile of the half-parted lips' effectively silences her 'second' story, the term Cynthia S. Jordan applies to women's stories criminally suppressed by androcentric culture" (1). What is even more interesting is Kot's elaboration on both the difference and similarity between the portrait itself and the text which is written about that portrait, and which the narrator finds:

> The narrator's defensive gaze, however, eventually fails when he finds himself being subdued by the portrait. He returns the portrait to the shadows and shifts his gaze from the portrait to the critical account of her portrait. The woman's eye in the portrait pierces his defensive gestures, but the woman in the text is depicted as captive. She becomes, as Judith Fetterley says of other Poe women, "a character trapped in [a] male text." For this shift in the narrator's gaze defines her once more as art. In this way, the critical history of the portrait, framed by quotation marks, serves the same purpose as the "Moresque frame" that surrounds the oval portrait: both attempt to isolate the image of woman, to free her representation from reality and to allegorize (and dehumanize) it as art. (3)

Kot concludes her article on an intriguing note, saying that "through 'The Oval Portrait,' Poe

examines the assumptions and traditions underlying his own aesthetic method, but he never succeeds in breaking their hold over his imagination" (5). One might say that the artist in the story requires his materials, his palette, etc., and is therefore reluctant to part with them, and this adds to the complexity of the entire scene. Kot's suggestion that Poe is in a duplicitous relationship with his aesthetic method, in "The Oval Portrait," could also be worded differently. I would suggest that such duplicity is the result of Poe's own contemplation on Hoffmann's phrase *Wissenschaft und Kunst*, or rather, in Poe's case it would be a contemplation, when translated, on the Keatsian phrase *Truth and Beauty*.

Poe's "The Oval Portrait," it would seem, comes close to Hoffmann's belief that art should have a cognitive role, as Sándor says of the latter, and in that way, Poe's tale implies truth even at the expense of beauty, something that, as Sándor has also suggested, Goethe and Schiller would not do (171-2). This pushes Poe's tale of the artist toward an expectedly Romantic view of things. The question I want to raise, therefore, is as follows: Is there anything in "The Oval Portrait" that would push it even further, toward a more Biedermeier view of the artist and the role of artists? If, for the moment, I stick with the phrase *Truth and Beauty*, or Hoffmann's *Wissenschaft und Kunst*, it appears that the story which the narrator discovers about the oval portrait is breaking up these two words once again, fragmenting Hoffmann's phrase, but not resubstituting Goethe's and Schiller's view of things either. The tale enters a new area of concern. The woman being painted is the beauty side of the equation, as the embedded story describes: "She was a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee" (*Poe* 2:664). But something is wrong: "And evil was the hour when she saw, and loved, and wedded the painter. He, passionate, studious, austere, and having already a bride in his Art;...And he was a passionate, and wild, and moody man, who became lost in reveries; so that he *would* not see that the light which fell so ghastlily in that lone turret withered the health and the spirits of his bride, who pined visibly to all but him" (2:665). There seems to be a rather clear incompatibility between truth and beauty here, because, in painting a portrait of the woman, in seeking the truth of her representation on canvas (a mimetic endeavor), the painter will destroy the beauty which that *truth of representation* seeks to paint. He

will have his truth, but a truth without its reason. Is it a self-sustaining truth? Are we once again witnesses to the same kind of Platonistic mechanism that resulted in the dénouement to "William Wilson"? These are difficult questions, but they manage to draw attention to Poe's complex treatment of the artist theme in "The Oval Portrait." If the truth of the artist's work, the mimetic perfection of the portrait, is indeed self-sustaining, passing through and beyond the beauty of merely representing the woman, then, surprisingly, however complete and transcendental that gesture, the embedded story still ends on a rather unsatisfactory note: "And then the brush was given, and then the tint was placed; and, for one moment, the painter stood entranced before the work which he had wrought; but in the next, while he yet gazed, he grew tremulous and very pallid, and aghast, and crying with a loud voice, 'This is indeed *Life* itself!' turned suddenly to regard his beloved:—*She was dead!*" (2:665-6). The painter has apparently transferred the woman's life into the portrait, which leads to a final question not directly posed by the abrupt dénouement: Is the portrait really alive? The life which it transcribes is obviously not as satisfactory as the woman's life which was to be represented in the first place. There is something in that act of representation, of mimetic transference, that is lost. Such a peculiar conclusion pushes Poe's artist tale in a different direction than Hoffmann's "Ritter Gluck," where the narrator is amazed at Gluck's musical abilities, and where Gluck, it is said, actually appears *as himself* to end the tale. Hoffmann's story completes the Romantic artistic ideal by having Gluck the man and his work exist as one, bypassing the fragmentational effects of portraiture. Poe's tale splits the idea of art from the subject of representation, particularly when that subject, the woman, becomes another dead object in a gallery of pictures, where her portrait, now, ironically, appears more lifelike, more successfully artful than she can. Art has become a monstrosity, and equally so, the artist is portrayed as having monstrous capabilities. Perhaps the artist is not fully conscious of what has happened, being moody and preoccupied with his work until the dénouement, but this makes it all the more dangerous. He has painted something approximating life but has not reduplicated life, and this draws a line between god and artist, a line which Hoffmann's narrator does not draw between Gluck and the almost supernatural, fantasy world which inspires him. There, we still have *Wissenschaft und*

Kunst. Here, in "The Oval Portrait," we have a rearrangement of Hoffmann's phrase, so that *Kunst* once again comes before *Wissenschaft*, as it does for Goethe and Schiller, but no longer true to its original intention. For Poe's artist, there might be beauty in truth, but no truth in beauty, and this appears to be a Biedermeier reinterpretation of the foundations behind Romantic art. Poe's artist, at the end of the day, is an unsuccessful artist, painting abstractions (ideas of *Life*) while wishing to remain mimetic, and consequently, remaining mimetic while wishing to paint abstractions. The tale, if anything, may be a parody of the narrow confines of Realist salon art which was becoming popular during the Biedermeier. Georg Himmelheber writes as follows:

> The third great theme of Biedermeier painting [apart from landscapes and cityscapes] was the portrait. A rising and self-confident bourgeoisie became the foremost patron of art and artists, almost all of whom devoted some of their effort to portraiture. A few specialized in supplying certain clienteles, travelling from city to city to paint literally hundreds of portraits—Johann Peter Krafft is said to have done over two thousand. At any rate, more portraits were painted during the Biedermeier period than at any other time before or since. (33)

Odoyevsky's "The Improvvisatore" is described by Charles E. Passage as "hardly a narrative at all, but rather the analysis of a certain situation, [it] produces an effect unlike that of a Hoffmann story. The characters, however, of the young poet [Cypriano] and the half-supernatural mage [Segeliel] are patently Hoffmannian types. The poet's beloved Charlotte—a German name—can hardly be reckoned a character since she appears only in a single paragraph of indirect report" (99). Passage elaborates:

> The author was here concerned with speculation upon the idea of a human being's having omniscience conferred upon him. Appalling misery and ultimate madness were the results of such a gift, he concluded, and having made his point, Odoevskij had said all that he intended to say; there is no "story." Thus *The Improvisor*,...offers evidence of the conception of Hoffmann-as-philosopher, the prevailing conception of him among the "Lovers of Wisdom" group in 1824-1825. (Odoevskij was a leader of that group and meetings of the society were held at his house.) It also gives a clue as to what those Muscovite youths meant by the term "philosophy." Unlike all other Hoffmannists, Odoevskij selected a Hoffmannian situation and—contemplated its moral significance. He practiced neither expansion nor diminution of material, neither "contaminatio" of episodes nor plot-conversion. (227-8)

While Passage's comment on the tale is somewhat ambiguous, Norman W. Ingham's opinion is quite clear: "Vladimir Odoevskij used fantasy in many of his stories where we find no trace of Hoffmann. His 'Improvizator' (The Improviser) contains the figure of the Mephistophelian Segeliel, who bestows on the hero the power of total knowledge—which turns out to be a curse rather

than a blessing. Segeliel's resemblance to satanic characters in Hoffmann is superficial" (187). William Edward Brown contradicts such an opinion: "The 'Seventh Night' begins with a story called 'The Improviser,'...There are more Hoffmannesque traits in this than in any other of the stories embedded in *Russian Nights*" (2:236-7). Neil Cornwell, giving a summary of the "The Improvvisatore," paraphrases Passage's comment: "This story,...has affinities with Hoffmann" (*The life, times and milieu of V. F. Odoyevsky* 49). In a later work, Cornwell adds the following to his comments on "The Improvvisatore": "This story, through Kipriano's magically or diabolically induced clairvoyancy, presents a debunking of literature, history, philosophy and music in a kind of extreme *ostranenie* [estrangement/defamiliarization]—everything seen strangely and known from an all-penetrating materialist and rational viewpoint—and even seems to predict the Formalist school of criticism..." (*Vladimir Odoevsky and Romantic Poetics* 76).

"The Improvvisatore," generally speaking, deals with the Romantic concept of the artist, as does Hoffmann's "Ritter Gluck," as does Poe's "The Oval Portrait." The contradictions in critical responses to Odoyevsky's artist tale, which I have mentioned, will be set aside for the moment. Rather than looking for Hoffmannian influence on the character types, etc., as does Passage, I will again pose the question which I used to distinguish Poe's tale from Hoffmann's: Is there anything in "The Improvvisatore" which pushes it towards a more Biedermeier view of the artist, and thus further from Hoffmann's tale, and closer to Poe's? I believe there is. The push towards a post-Romantic view of art and the artist occurs at two levels in this tale, primarily at a thematic level (a reinterpretation of the idea of art in this tale and also within the context of *Russian Nights* where it is embedded) but also at the root of characterization of the only other major figure besides Cypriano, namely, Segeliel. Cypriano is given superhuman creative power by Dr. Segeliel, who is a complex figure in the tale. After many years abroad, Segeliel returns to his native land "with gold bars and a heap of precious stones," and apparently with the power to cure any disease, but without charging money for the services (*Russian Nights* 134). However, he places "peculiar conditions" on his services: "For example, he would demand that respect be paid to him in a manner abjectly humiliating to the other person;...There were even rumors that sometimes he would ask a price so

infamous that virtuous tradition has not preserved any information about it....People also noticed that when someone did not agree to the doctor's conditions, the patient would invariably die" (135). Segeliel was taken to court but none of the accusations were proven, and those who brought forth accusations were in turn punished by mysterious forces: "...if there was a storm or whirlwind, the clouds would pass over Segeliel's castle and burst open above the houses and granaries of his enemies, and many people saw Segeliel come out onto his terrace at such a time and happily clink glasses with his friends" (137-8). Passage, later on in his study, again argues for a Hoffmannian influence on the Segeliel character, saying that "Segeliel reverses the benevolence of the great mages Prosper Alpanus and Archivarius Lindhorst relative to their poet-clients," but there is no real proof of this, and Passage himself seems unsure, saying that eventually Segeliel is identified with Satan in the *Russian Nights* (Passage 236-7). There seems to be clear evidence in "The Improvvisatore" for reading Segeliel as a Satanic figure, particularly because of the unusual statements with which he greets Cypriano, before giving the latter superhuman creativity: "'Look at you, sons of Adam!' said Dr. Segeliel. (This was his favorite saying when he was in good humor.) 'Adam's children! they all remember their father's privilege'" (*Russian Nights* 138). What is most unusual is that Cypriano feels rather comfortable approaching this figure and asking him for help, and he does not seem worried by his peculiar statements. This all might be evidence of a moral questioning of the artist's role, or a statement on the moral ambiguity of art, comments reminiscent of Poe's "The Oval Portrait," but insinuated here by Odoyevsky:

> "You [Segeliel] could not invent a state worse than the one I am in now." The doctor laughed. "I'll be frank with you: it was not only the poetry, not only the desire of fame that brought me to you; another feeling, more delicate...If I had more ingenuity in writing, I could make my fortune, and then my Charlotte would be more favorably disposed toward me.... You understand me, Doctor?"
>
> "I like that!" shouted Segeliel. "Just like our mother, the Inquisition, I adore frankness, and complete confidence in me. Only those who want to outsmart me will fare ill. But I see that you are a very direct and outspoken person, and you should be rewarded as you deserve." (139)

The fact that Cypriano must go to this doctor to be given the power to *"see everything, know everything, understand everything"* says a great deal (139). It implies that Cypriano himself does not have what is required to become an artist (a poet) and is in need of devices external to

himself. It implies that inspiration is not enough to make a poet, but things other than inspiration will miss their mark also, making poetry utilitarian: "His face [Cypriano's],...did not reflect the lofty enjoyment of a poet, satisfied with his creation, but rather the simple, self-satisfied look of a juggler surprising the crowd with his skill. Full of mockery he watched the tears, the laughter he had produced;..." (132). Odoyevsky's "The Improvvisatore," like Poe's "The Oval Portrait," demonstrates an incompatibility between truth and beauty, or more specifically, a reinterpretation of Hoffmann's phrase *Wissenschaft und Kunst*. I suggested that Poe fragments this Hoffmannian phrase, placing *Kunst* before *Wissenschaft*, in the manner of Goethe and Schiller, but without its original intention. Such a destabilization occurs after Cypriano visits Segeliel, as well, but here *Kunst* seems to have even less of a presence than in "The Oval Portrait," where the mimetic beauty of the portrait is undeniable, however terrible the context in which the artist drains the life out of his wife. Instead of seeing Charlotte "waiting for him, dressed up, with her blond hair done up and adorned with a pink ribbon, glancing into the mirror with an air of innocent coquetry" (141), Cypriano sees something else:

> Through a cellular web, as through a veil, Cypriano saw that three [four?]-faceted artery called the heart palpitating in his Charlotte; he saw the red blood rush out of it and reach the hair follicles and produce the delicate pallor he had loved so much in her. Poor devil! In her beautiful, loving eyes he saw only a kind of camera obscura, a retinal membrane, a drop of hideous liquid; in her graceful walk, only the mechanism of levers....He saw her gallbladder, the movements of her digestive system....
>
> Horrified, Cypriano left her. In a nearby house there was an ikon of the Madonna. Cypriano used to turn to it in moments of despair and from its harmonious appearance receive consolation for his suffering soul. He went to it now; he fell on his knees; he implored. Alas! The image no longer existed for him: the paint moved on it, and he saw in the work of art only chemical fermentation. (141-2)

Cypriano's *gift* pushes him beyond mimetic beauty and Romantic, spiritual conceptions of art and into what, for the moment, in this tale, appears as a post-Romantic abyss. A line has again, as in "The Oval Portrait," been drawn between truth and beauty, in what amounts to a Biedermeier reinterpretation of the artist figure and the role of art. The fact that Cypriano needs Segeliel's help to become a poet ruins the unified Romantic image of artist-as-creator that we see in Hoffmann's "Ritter Gluck." But Segeliel himself makes such a destabilization all the more complex because of the way that his character is presented in "The Improvvisatore." Segeliel is presented as a figure

who hands out gifts (of creativity, health, power, omniscience, etc.) quite freely, persecuting those who do not comply with his agreement, but also giving gifts *in full* to those who are eager to learn, as is Cypriano. Segeliel's role is complex because it is, at times, ambiguous. He is essentially presented as an evil figure, with supernatural powers acquired abroad, but his evil seems a part of his many eccentricities, just one of his many poses. To use Cypriano as the example, if there is any genuine evil in his gift of superhuman, poetic creativity, it comes about because of his lack of understanding of that gift, and a lack of preparation before receiving it. Segeliel is merely the post office, handing out signifiers, Lacan's "letters of sufferance," to sufferers.

Odoyevsky's idea for the character of Segeliel may have come from one of his fragments, an incomplete novel entitled *Segeliel, the Don Quixote of the Nineteenth Century*, and Karlinsky summarizes Segeliel's role in that work as follows:

> Segeliel is one of the fallen angels who were expelled from Paradise at the time of the fall of Lucifer. His main fault is pity—pity for the stars that Lucifer casually destroys, pity for the people who are tempted by him. Segeliel refuses to reconcile the idea of an almighty and kindly Creator with the existence of evil in the world [which may explain the division between truth and beauty in "The Improvvisatore"]. He even hopes for Lucifer's repentance. For this, God cast him out of Paradise and Lucifer in turn punishes him for his middle-of-the-road position by casting him still further down into the world of humans: "into their ashen world." Joyously, Segeliel accepts this punishment and appears on the earth as a fourteen-year-old boy. His first act is to help a young shepherd find his lost flock. Using his supernatural powers, Segeliel points out the most direct path to retrieve the animals; but there is an area of quicksand in the way, the shepherd sinks into it and his father who tries to save him also perishes.
>
> Segeliel meant well, but by not realizing all the factors and consequences involved in a given act of kindness, he killed two people he was trying to help. In Odoevsky's archives there are sketches outlining Segeliel's further adventures on earth [which remain unpublished to this day]. In one of them he is brought to gradual realization that men can be helped by allowing them to develop their untapped potential, something Lucifer is anxious to prevent them from achieving. Another of these fragments shows Segeliel in the role of a Russian government official. He tries to work on official papers and administrative problems with full use of his divine intelligence and fails miserably, while his secretary, being unscrupulous and opportunistic, manages the government business with great ease. (176)

The Dr. Segeliel featured in "The Improvvisatore" is more clearly evil than this Segeliel of whom Karlinsky speaks, but some of the ambiguity of this character can still be seen in the artist tale which forms the Seventh Night of *Russian Nights*. I suggest that this tale, much like Poe's "The Oval Portrait," tends toward a Biedermeier vision of the artist figure, splitting truth from beauty and questioning the role of art, a questioning which is more generally demonstrated in the entire

frame-tale novel, *Russian Nights*, but also more specifically through the ambiguous exchange of creative power between Segeliel and Cypriano, which colors not only this tale, but the entire novel with a post-Romantic nostalgia and melancholy for the artistic unity of "Ritter Gluck," a nostalgia which is not necessarily typical, but certainly characteristic of the Biedermeier: "He [Cypriano] complained that people beat him if in a fit of poetic rapture and for lack of paper he cut his verses on tables, and even more that everyone laughed at the only sweet recollection Segeliel's pernicious gift had been unable to erase—the first verses he had ever written for Charlotte" (*Russian Nights* 145).

Passage seems to be in basic agreement with my opinion of "The Improvvisatore" and more generally of the novel in which it is embedded when saying that "surveyed...in its totality, *Russian Nights* is an impressive if tendentious prose poem...and Belinskij was in error in terming it Hoffmannian" (106). Ingham goes further by citing from Odoyevsky's second foreward to the novel: "Acknowledging the parallel between the form of *Russkie noci* [*Russian Nights*] and that of *Die Serapionsbrüder*, he [Odoyevsky] claims that an influence is impossible because the germ of *Russkie noci* was in his mind as early as the 1820's, when he had seen no Hoffmann other than the one story 'Das Majorat'" (qtd. in Ingham 179). Ingham also mentions that "Hoffmann is directly referred to only a few times in Odoevskij's published writings," as for example in the tale "Sebastian Bach" (also a part of *Russian Nights*), where the following phrase is found, "Hoffmannian tales of Byzantine chroniclers" (qtd. in Ingham 180). Ingham explains this phrase by saying that "in Odoevskij's day the early chronicles were considered forged, and Odoevskij was using them as a synonym for wild invention. It certainly was not a compliment to Hoffmann" (180). Mersereau seems to avoid the issue by saying that "the late date of *Russian Nights* puts it beyond the limits of [his] study of Romantic fiction,..." (181). He believes that "it is fair to call Odoevsky 'the Russian Hoffmann,' for he seems to reflect the German Romantic's art more consistently and clearly than any other of the so-called Russian Hoffmannists," but he also seems to contradict himself by saying that Odoyevsky "may perhaps be credited as the source of the stream of *Kuenstlernovellen* in [Russian] Romantic fiction, although his works in that direction are quite unlike the typical ones in

many respects....[because they] show Odoevsky's acquaintance with Kant and Schelling. Odoevsky's brand of *Kuenstlernovelle* was not imitated by others" (175). William Edward Brown is more in agreement with Passage, but also more thorough:

> Contemporary critics saw in its form [*Russian Nights*] a certain similarity with E. T. A. Hoffmann's collection *Die Serapionsbrüder*; Odoevsky vehemently denied any connection, however, and indeed the similarity is very superficial....If Odoevsky has any literary model in mind for his work, it is certainly not Hoffmann's *Serapionsbrüder* but the Platonic dialogues:...It is known from Odoevsky's letters and other evidence that he had conceived as early as the 1820s a work, to be called "The Madhouse," which would have been along the lines of *Russian Nights*, and would have embodied several of the stories which eventually found their place in the latter. It appears that in "The Madhouse" he had in mind to subject to criticism the idealist German philosophies of Schelling, Fichte et al., which had generated such enthusiasm in him and the other members of the Wisdom Lovers, but which he had found increasingly irrelevant to the conditions of life in the later 1820s and 1830s....[in *Russian Nights*] Odoevsky attempts to bridge the generation gap between the 1820s and his infatuation with Schelling and the 1840s and its pragmatism, both unsatisfactory as philosophies of life to him in 1844. The device [of having the frame-tale character Faust read extracts from a journal left by Schellingians, recounting their frustrations] serves its purpose, but puts Faust in the curious position of having to explain and defend some positions which he (or Odoevsky) has already outgrown. (230-1)

P. N. Sakulin, in his large 1913 study of Odoyevsky, considers *Russian Nights* to be "the poetic monument of philosophical-mystical idealism," a consideration which does not clarify much (qtd. in Cornwell, *Vladimir Odoevsky and Romantic Poetics* 78). Vasilii Gippius, responding to Sakulin's study in what is considered "one of the few 'classics' of Odoevsky criticism, concentrates mainly on endeavouring to determine the exact shade of Odoevsky's romantic ideology; he stresses the general influence of Jena romanticism, perceives an underlying pessimistic dualism, and sees *Russkie nochi* [*Russian Nights*] as Odoevsky's attempt at the romantic 'universal novel,' with a form closer to Tieck's *Phantasus* than to Hoffmann" (qtd. in Cornwell 78-9). In what is still considered "the most significant step in the modern reevaluation of Odoevsky's work [1969], Iurii Mann provided the first sustained reading of the work [*Russian Nights*]—not as a collection of stories linked by a contrived philosophical commentary, but as an artistic whole" (qtd. in Cornwell 79):

> ...[in Mann's view *Russian Nights* derives] from Russian 'philosophical aesthetics' which, as distinct from 'romanticism' in general, he sees as a line, inspired originally by German idealist philosophy (particularly that of Schelling), stretching from Odoevsky and Venevitinov, through Nadezhdin, to Stankevich and Belinsky—the 'top layer' of romantic aesthetics. Opposed in the 1820s both to classicism and to romanticism proper, its formulations contained 'inner difficulties and contradictions' which led it into crisis by the late 1820s, the time when,

> in Odoevsky's testimony, 'Schelling's philosophy ceased to satisfy seekers of truth and they dispersed in various directions.'...Odoevsky transferred these problems into the artistic sphere and it was this crisis in philosophical aesthetics, Mann considers, that gave rise to 'the unique architectonics of *Russian Nights*, which surmounted the romantic norms and carries the clear imprint of philosophical universalism'.... (qtd. in Cornwell 80-1)

Cornwell, for his part, considers *Russian Nights* "as something of a synthesis of what [is] termed the novella tradition of the frame-tale, stemming from *The Thousand and One Nights*, and the philosophical tradition which comes down from Plato" (90). However elaborate and interesting these suggestions are, particularly Mann's idea of imprinted "philosophical universalism," I believe that Odoyevsky's tale "The Improvvisatore," and more generally its presence in *Russian Nights*, is clearly representative of what Mann has termed the "inner difficulties and contradictions" of Romantic aesthetics "which led it into crisis by the late 1820s," namely, the Hoffmannian phrase *Wissenschaft und Kunst*, which, instead of being duplicated in *Russian Nights*, falls apart. Neither Cypriano nor Segeliel function on poetic inspiration. The former is given a mechanical gift and is described early on as a "juggler" (*Russian Nights* 132). The latter, when summoning up special powers in order to give Cypriano the gift of creativity, instead of reciting lines of cryptic text in the tradition of magicians and priests, utters with laughter: "Pepe! the flannel coat" (140)!

VII - Detectives

But what of the detective? Is it possible to base an argument for difference between a high Romantic and a more Biedermeier paradigm by reading Poe's "The Purloined Letter" (1844), Hoffmann's "Mademoiselle de Scudéri" (1819), and Odoyevsky's "The Tale of a Dead Body, Belonging to No One Knows Whom" (1833), in relation to such a figure? It is a complex and difficult argument to make, but some of its aspects should prove fruitful, particularly in clarifying Jon Thompson's remark, that "what is valorized in Poe's detective stories,...is not rationalism per se, but a romanticized version or ideology of rationalism in which reason, or more properly 'analysis,' figures as the highest mode of apprehension" (47).

In Poe's "The Purloined Letter," Dupin attributes the Prefect of Police's failure in discovering the letter to the following:

> "...the remote source of his [the Prefect's] defeat lies in the supposition that the Minister is a fool, because he has acquired renown as a poet. All fools are poets; this the Prefect *feels*; and he is merely guilty of a *non distributio medii* in thence inferring that all poets are fools."
>
> "But is this really the poet?" [the narrator] asked. "There are two brothers, I know; and both have attained reputation in letters. The Minister I believe has written learnedly on the Differential Calculus. He is a mathematician, and no poet."
>
> "You are mistaken; I know him well; he is both. As poet *and* mathematician, he would reason well; as mere mathematician, he could not have reasoned at all, and thus would have been at the mercy of the Prefect."
>
> "You surprise me," [the narrator] said, "by these opinions, which have been contradicted by the voice of the world. You do not mean to set at naught the well-digested idea of centuries. The mathematical reason has long been regarded as *the* reason *par excellence*." (*Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe* 3:986)

Dupin suggests that "many a schoolboy is a better reasoner" than the Prefect (3:984), and he is not impressed by the Prefect's methods of searching for the letter, in which "the fiftieth part of a line could not escape" the latter's scrutiny (3:979). Dupin asks: "What is all this boring, and probing, and sounding, and scrutinizing with the microscope, and dividing the surface of the building into registered square inches—what is it all but an exaggeration of *the application* of the one principle or set of principles of search,...to which the Prefect,...has been accustomed" (3:985)? Poe's detective figure believes that the schoolboy who fashions the expression of his face to correspond with that of his opponent in the game of even and odd, in order to see "what thoughts or sentiments arise in

[his] mind or heart," is more effective (3:984), and Dupin says: "This response of the schoolboy lies at the bottom of all the spurious profundity which has been attributed to Rochefoucault, to La Bruyère, to Machiavelli, and to Campanella" (3:985). And this is why Thompson's remark about the romanticized version of rationalism is so significant for any reading of "The Purloined Letter," and more broadly, of Poe's ratiocinative trilogy. How can Dupin's rationalism any longer be called rationalism? Does this peculiarity, of romanticized rationalism, mean that he transcends his presence as a detective figure, going beyond the limitations of analysis and into something more generally omniscient, subsuming and subverting the tale's apparently thematic content, of chasing purloined letters? I raise such questions to emphasize the uniqueness of the detective figure in "The Purloined Letter," but more generally, I also raise these questions to draw attention to the differences between Hoffmann's figure of Scudéri-as-detective and Poe's Dupin. These differences not only distinguish the tales from each other; more importantly, they seem to indicate that what Thompson calls Poe's romanticized version of rationalism is not necessarily that either, particularly because Scudéri seems to fit better such a description. Dupin is too much to place under just that one label, particularly when he remarks as follows: "I dispute the availability, and thus the value, of that reason which is cultivated in any especial form other than the *abstractly logical* [my italics]" (3:987).

Parallels can certainly be drawn between the Prefect of Police in Poe's tale and Desgrais, "the lieutenant of the *maréchaussée* [mounted police]" in Hoffmann's "Mademoiselle de Scudéri" (*Selected Writings of E. T. A. Hoffmann* 1:216). The two are frequently faced with limitations, the former in tracking the purloined letter down, the latter in tracking down jewelry thieves:

> Desgrais foamed at the mouth in fury at the way the criminals evaded his net. The district of the city in which he happened to be was always spared, while in the other sections, where no crime had been anticipated, murder and robbery claimed their wealthiest victims.
>
> Desgrais hit upon the scheme of using several doubles, so similar in gait, posture, speech, figure, and face, that even the police could not identify the real Desgrais. Meanwhile Desgrais, alone and at the risk of his life, spied in the most secret hideouts and followed at a distance this man or that who, at his suggestion, wore valuable jewelry. *This* man remained unscathed; the thieves, then, knew about *this* technique too. Desgrais was at the end of his wits. (1:222)

It is more difficult to find similarities between Scudéri and Dupin as detective figures. True, they both write poetry. Scudéri is "known for her charming poems,..." (1:213). Dupin says: "...I have

been guilty of certain doggerel myself" (3:979). But then again, who has not? We must keep in mind that they live in different places in Paris, and in different eras. Scudéri "inhabited a small house in the rue Saint Honoré" (1:213). Dupin, it is already said in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," lives in "a time-eaten and grotesque mansion, long deserted through superstitions into which [he] did not inquire, and tottering to its fall in a retired and desolate portion of the Faubourg St. Germain" (2:532). This is interesting primarily because the Faubourg St. Germain shows up in Hoffmann's tale too, and incidentally, not as a part of the main plot:

> In the suburb Faubourg Sainte-Germain there lived an old woman, La Voisin by name, who practiced fortune-telling and necromancy and, abetted by her accomplices Le Sage and Le Vigoureux, excited fear and astonishment even in people who were not considered weak or gullible. But this was not all. Like Sainte-Croix a pupil of Exili, she could also brew the subtle poison which left no trace, and in this way she served unscrupulous sons who sought an early inheritance and dissolute wives who sought another and younger husband. Desgrais made his way into her confidence, she confessed everything, and the *Chambre Ardente* condemned her to be burned at the stake;.... (1:220)

Is this what gave rise to the "superstitions into which [Dupin] did not inquire..."? It is interesting to realize that Dupin lives on the same street as Voisin the fortune-teller, and possibly in the same, now crumbling mansion. Dupin, much like Odoyevsky's Segeliel, much like Hoffmann's La Voisin, seems to possess an occult, perhaps diabolical power, but channels it in other, more constructive directions, or does he? Perhaps Dupin has merely replaced La Voisin's black magic with a form of blackmail that even outdoes the Minister D—'s, the "unscrupulous son" once again bringing the letter back to the "dissolute wife"? Scudéri is hardly as mysterious. Her mode of analysis is not as consistent as Dupin's. Dupin is certain that the letter is located on D—'s premises, but not on his person. Scudéri, after listening to Madelon's speech about the "innocence of poor Olivier," is at first convinced (1:238). Later on, she changes her mind: "...Mademoiselle de Scudéri despaired of ever again recognizing truth. The terrible suspicion that Madelon might be implicated and share the heinous bloodguilt was given free rein,...Many things which had previously been regarded as evidence of innocence and purity now became proof of wanton maliciousness and studied hypocrisy" (1:243). And even later, she once more changes her mind: "Had Mademoiselle de Scudéri not already been convinced of Olivier's innocence, she must have been convinced of this now as she saw them both [Olivier and Madelon] forgetting, in the rapture of profound and

sincere love, the world, their misery, and their indescribable torment. 'No,' she called, 'only a pure heart is capable of such blissful forgetfulness'" (1:261). Scudéri reasons *with feeling*, and may be said to empathize with Madelon and Olivier Brusson, in the way that the schoolboy empathizes with his opponent, as Dupin describes in "The Purloined Letter." But there is something different about Dupin's approach. It does not seem to be as much a display of Scudérian empathy as of pure intuition, minus the feeling, which brings it toward a mechanically omniscient conception of understanding. Dupin becomes not the manifestation of Deism, but of God in a Deist conception, not interfering with the unfolding of the universe unless he really has to. This urges me to ask why Thompson considers Poe's conception of the superman, Dupin, to be different than Nietzsche's, namely, less systematic (49)? While Scudéri has faith, believes in innocence and goodness, and even hesitates at moments in making decisions, Dupin never mentions ideas of good and evil directly. They may be a part of his game, or they may not be a part, but either way, the Nietzschean will to power is present. And Dupin is certainly more aloof, more *out there* than Scudéri, who must nonetheless work through bureaucratic layers, remaining within the realm of law and ethics, begging the king at one point:

> Before he [the king] was aware of what was going on, while still in a turmoil from the fantastic story just told him [by Scudéri], Mademoiselle lay at his feet begging mercy for Olivier Brusson.
>
> "What are you doing?" the King exclaimed, taking both her hands and seating her in an armchair. "What are you doing, Mademoiselle? You have astonished me. It is a terrifying story. Who can vouch for the accuracy of Brusson's story?"
>
> "Miossens' statement—the search of Cardillac's house—an inner conviction—oh, Madelon's virtuous heart that recognized the identical virtue in the unfortunate Brusson!" Mademoiselle de Scudéri responded. (1:267)

Irrespective of Thompson's suggestion that Poe's idea of the superman is different than Nietzsche's, Dupin is still more of a Nietzschean, and therefore post-Romantic conception than Hoffmann's Scudéri. As I said earlier, it is Scudéri who seems to operate more thoroughly under the rubric of Thompson's romanticized version of rationalism. I can see why Thompson would consider Poe's superman to differ from a purely Nietzschean conception because, to use the case of Dupin, the latter has a personal, individual interest in returning the purloined letter back to the Queen, even though his attitude may appear systematic. But is this really worth pointing out? Sys-

tematic endeavors begin from an individual basis, and continue to have an individual goal: this, at least, is what Dupin demonstrates. If Dupin is, therefore, not purely Nietzschean, he is nonetheless more honest. He is a Biedermeier version of the superman, operating from "his little back library, or book-closet, *au troisième, No. 33, Rue Dunôt, Faubourg St. Germain*" (*Poe* 3:974). Dupin seems to be located half-way between a Nietzschean idea of the superman and Scudéri's rather innocent, romanticized rationalism. Perhaps this is why Dupin has a distaste for any mode of thinking other than the *abstractly logical*, which allows him to remain in his twilight zone, so to speak. But this begs another question: Is it possible that Dupin has more affinities with Cardillac than with Scudéri? András Imre Sándor writes as follows:

> If Schiller's robbers opposed society in the name of freedom and justice, Cardillac opposes it in the name of quality. He considers that he stands above the puppets of fashion, and possesses the right, ethical point of view. All criminals, unless they act out of despair, feel superior to the rest of society,...The artist and the dictator are, of course, not identical, but they have a common impetus, and if we think of Hitler we can see the truth of Hoffmann's diagnosis. Both are supermen, representatives of the male principle, idealists; both are anti-social as far as actual society is concerned, reckless in their work, and absolutists in their demands. They are each other's doubles, the artist being a latent dictator, and the dictator a latent artist [Hitler was refused admission into an art academy]. Cardillac could never be a Napoleon, for he has no intention of changing the actual reality around him, of re-shaping mankind according to a vision. (236-7)

It is true that both Cardillac and Dupin find themselves detached from a greater sense of society, the former working on his jewels, the latter meditating in his book-closet. Responding to the narrator's suggestion that the mathematical reason is the reason par excellence, Dupin says, quoting from Chamfort's *Maximes et Pensées*: "*Il y a à parier,...que toute idée publique, toute convention reçue, est une sottise, car elle a convenu au plus grand nombre* [It is safe to wager that every idea that is public property, every accepted convention, is a bit of stupidity, for it has suited the majority]" (*Poe* 3:986-7). Scudéri is different: when she has something important to do, a social presence and impetus is always nearby. When she goes to fetch the injured Madelon, we read the following: "A low murmur of approval swept through the crowd. The women lifted the girl up; everyone pressed towards her; a hundred hands came to her aid, and as though floating through the air, she [Madelon] was carried to the coach while blessings from all showered down upon the worthy lady who had snatched an innocent from the bloodthirsty tribunal" (*Hoffmann* 1:237). And near the dénoue-

ment, after Scudéri has spoken with the king about Brusson's innocence, we read: "Masses of people began assembling in front of [President] La Régnie's palace and shouted threateningly, 'Release Olivier Brusson, he is innocent'; and they even flung stones at the windows so that La Régnie was forced to seek protection from the incensed rabble with the *maréchaussée*" (1:269). References to a society beyond Dupin's book-closet include "the shoutings of a mob" outside D—'s window when Dupin's hired man fires a musket, and "the good people of Paris," who would no longer hear of Dupin had he attempted to escape openly with D—'s letter (*Poe* 3:992). These references play no real part in Dupin's game of wits with D— and the Prefect of Police, a game that is played behind closed doors, and for very personal reasons. The shoutings of the mob are in fact orchestrated. Dupin substitutes a facsimile for the purloined letter while D— is looking out the window at a society voicing concerns which are no doubt believed to be genuine, about the *lunatic with a gun*.

Cardillac, much like Dupin, is more aloof than Scudéri, but are there really any further similarities between the two figures? Sándor suggests, citing the example of Hitler, that the latent artist is a dictator and the latent dictator an artist, but he then suggests that Cardillac could never really be a Napoleon (236-7). Sándor may be drawing a line between different types of dictators, and he more obviously suggests that Cardillac has latent dictatorial qualities, but is there any real value in extending such an argument to accomodate for Dupin? Cardillac may be a latent dictator because of his anti-social characteristics, as Sándor notes. He steals his jewelry back, murdering if he has to, and works alone. Dupin also works alone, but he seems more *asocial* than anti-social, and this is in keeping with his nature, that, I would suggest, approximates a Biedermeier attitude. Society may not play an important part in "The Purloined Letter," but Dupin nonetheless refers to "the good people of Paris" (*Poe* 3:992). There may be something condescending in such a statement, but it is all more witty than violent, in contrast to Cardillac's role. And besides, there is a fundamental difference between the way Cardillac and Dupin operate. The latter is calm, meditative, and rather detached from his work. Cardillac is more passionate, spontaneous, and intimately involved with his craft, and is more obviously insane, speaking as follows to Brusson of

one of his victims: "He came, I fell upon him, he screamed, but I seized him from behind and plunged my dagger into his heart—the jewelry was mine! This done, I felt a peace and contentment in my soul such as I had never known before. The ghost had disappeared, Satan's voice was no more. Now I knew what it was that my evil star demanded. I had to obey or perish" (*Hoffmann* 1:256). I believe that some of Cardillac's less harmful eccentricities can be seen as overlapping with Dupin's, but I do not believe that there are more concrete similarities. Cardillac is a combination of petty thief and high Romantic villain. Dupin is more of a detached meta-figure, and thus, all the more ambiguous. Even the Minister D—, who can be read as the obvious heir to Cardillac, is less of a spontaneous villain and more of a mechanical, amusing nuisance, a man who is inspired by personal convenience rather than by Romantic, aesthetic concerns, as Dupin implies: "I found D— – at home, yawning, lounging, and dawdling, as usual, and pretending to be in the last extremity of *ennui*. He is, perhaps, the most really energetic human being now alive—but that is only when nobody sees him" (*Poe* 3:990). To use Sándor's argument, I will say that Dupin, however much closer to the Nietzschean superman than Cardillac, who is more fiery and spontaneous, is still, of the two, further away from letting his latent dictatorial tendencies run loose: "It is all very well to talk about the *facilis descensus Averni* [easy descent to Hades], but in all kinds of climbing, as Catalani said of singing, it is far more easy to get up than to come down. In the present instance I have no sympathy—at least no pity—for him who descends. He [the Minister D—] is that *monstrum horrendum*, an unprincipled man of genius" (3:993).

Cardillac, like Scudéri, can be placed under the rubric of romanticized rationalism which Thompson suggested, somewhat imprecisely, is descriptive of Poe's ratiocinative trilogy. Poe's idea of the superman, Dupin, is indeed different than Nietzsche's, as Thompson more precisely suggested, but such an idea is at the same time, and problematically, closer to Nietzsche than the detective figure of Scudéri. Cardillac's only major quality that is in keeping with the Nietzschean superman is his unprincipled genius. Dupin, in contrast, may have more qualities in keeping with Nietzschean ideas but lacks the major one, unprincipled genius, which D— certainly has, but the latter is not as invigorated a character as Cardillac. Both Cardillac and Scudéri think with feeling,

the former empathizing with his jewelry, the latter with her clients, Madelon and Olivier. Dupin is, as I said, too much to be precisely described by such phrases as romanticized rationalism. He disdains any mode of thinking other than the *abstractly logical*, and it is perhaps the sheer vastness of such a mode of thinking that allows him to scribble the following phrase from Crébillon's *Atrée* into the facsimile of D——'s letter: "—Un dessein si funeste, / S'il n'est digne d'Atrée, est digne de Thyeste" (*Poe* 3:993). Here we have a quotation saturated with Classical motifs but kept lively by the allusion to Senecan horror. This is worlds away from Scudéri's unwitting, chivalrous remark to the king that gets turned around when Cardillac scribbles it into his letter of appreciation to her, sending the letter in a box filled with *complementary jewelry*. "Un amant qui craint les voleurs, / n'est point digne d'amour [A lover who is afraid of thieves / Is not at all worthy of love]" (*Hoffmann* 1:225-7).

Odoyevsky's "The Tale of a Dead Body, Belonging to No One Knows Whom" is an interesting variation on Poe's and Hoffmann's ratiocinative fiction. While I have suggested that Poe's Dupin is a more post-Romantic, possibly Biedermeier figure than Scudéri, Odoyevsky's tale seems to be even more thoroughly situated in such a paradigm because it drops the detective figure entirely, and thereby rids the plot of an all-seeing and all-knowing figure who, at some root level, however modified, can still be equated with high Romantic aspirations. Odoyevsky's tale begins with a "declaration by the district court [which] was posted around the market villages of the [fictional] Rezhensk area," and which described a dead body found there (*The Salamander and Other Gothic Tales* 17). Before we arrive at the main plot, the narrator mentions how a clerk named Sevastyanich was "posted to the investigation" (18), and it appears that this clerk is being substituted for the more obvious detective figure of Hoffmann and Poe. Reminiscing about his past adventures, Sevastyanich comes upon the following one:

> ...when the Chief-of-Police was faced with a demand for the restitution of a considerable accounting deficit, [Sevastyanich] managed to involve up to fifteen people in the mess, to spread the deficit over the whole lot of them, and then place all of them under open amnesty. In short, Sevastyanich saw that in all the remarkable cases of the Rezhensk district court he had been the one and only culprit, instigator and executor; that without him the assessor would have been finished, as would the Chief-of-Police, the District Judge and the Marshal of Nobility; that by himself alone was the ancient glory of the Rezhensk district maintained, and unwittingly there crossed Sevastyanich's mind a sweet sense of his own merit. (19)

Sevastyanich is criminal and clerk rolled into one, and indeed, the tale can most obviously be read as an allegory of bureaucratic corruption. This allegorical quality is heightened when the main plot is put forward, and an invisible, immaterial man arrives to question Sevastyanich about the found body:

> "What can I do-oo for you?" [asked Sevastyanich]
> "You represent the court which has appealed to the owners of the dead body picked up at Morkovkino."
> "Ye-es."
> "Well, you see, it's my body."
> "Ye-es...."
> "You can imagine what it's like for me without a body...could you please help me out with this favour, as soon as possible?"
> "All in good time, sir, but it's a bit tricky to do this sort of thing, just like that—it's not a pancake, you know, you can't just wrap it round your finger. Inquiries have to be made.... If you were to make a small contribution...."
> "Oh, please have no doubt about that. Just hand over my body and, by all means, fifty roubles...."
> At these words, Sevastyanich raised his eyes,...
> "Kindly just write. I'll tell you what to put; write: I possess...."
> "A fixed possession, is it?"—asked Sevastyanich.
> "No, sir: I possess an unfortunate weakness...."
> "For strong drink, is it? Oh, that's highly shameful...."
> "No, sir: I possess an unfortunate weakness for leaving my body...."
> "What the devil!"—shouted Sevastyanich. (21-2)

Deciding not to sit in his open cart on a highway in cold weather, the invisible man outlines how he jumped out of his body, secured it to the cart, and hurried on over to the nearest post-station to warm up by the stove, assuming that the horse, cart, and his body would show up later that day, which they never did, the body possibly falling "out of the wagon because of the pot-holes" and the horse joining "up with a string of carts" (23).

Cornwell believes that this tale is an example "of Odoevsky's ready wit and a Gogolian tendency towards whimsical black comedy:...[it] elaborates on the Gogolian Mirgorod model of grotesque provincial life" (*The Salamander and Other Gothic Tales* 3-4). The tale is a part of Odoyevsky's 1833 collection, *Variegated Tales*, and is representative of the larger work, which consists of "delicate...parodies on strands of Russian and European romantic themes" (3). Polevoy gave a rather hostile contemporary review of this collection of tales in the *Moscow Telegraph*, attacking the works "as cold allegories of dull ideas while purporting to be...in the new fantastic vein that required the reader to think and feel as a poet; they fell far short of Hoffmann, 'the lofti-

est model in this genre'" (qtd. in Passage 110). Baron Rozen's *Northern Flowers*, in contrast, was full of praise for these "original tales so vividly reminiscent of Hoffmann" (qtd. in Passage 110). Cornwell urges that "the composition and reception of *Pestrye skazki* [*Variegated Tales*] must...be considered in light of the literary polemics of the day, in which the brand of romanticism with which Odoevsky was experimenting ran contrary to the more robust variety (à la Victor Hugo) favoured by writers such as Polevoy and Marlinsky" (*Vladimir Odoevsky and Romantic Poetics* 142). "The Tale of a Dead Body, Belonging to No One Knows Whom," I will say, much like the *Variegated Tales* in which it sits, occupies a "transitional position in Odoevsky's development" but is less transitory in significance (142). Its significance consists in the movement toward a post-Romantic, Biedermeier paradigm that seems to occur there; the evidence for this would be the tale's parodic, caricatural atmosphere, most notably the petty clerk Sevastyanich, who is far removed from figures like Scudéri and Dupin. Odoyevsky's tale moves beyond the aristocratic pageantry and intrigue in Hoffmann's "Mademoiselle de Scudéri," but it also, as I have argued, seems to move further than Poe's "The Purloined Letter." Poe's tale is indeed tinged with post-Romantic ideas but is more difficult to situate because of the possible Nietzscheanism of a figure like Dupin, and the probably high Romantic foundation behind such an all-seeing figure, two elements which get fused, rather paradoxically, with the Biedermeier atmosphere of the story, where meditation takes place in bookclosets, letters are exchanged in secret, and revolution is just another word for status quo. Regarding Odoyevsky's work, Passage argues as follows:

> Affinities with Hoffmann do exist in *Variegated Tales*, but of an odd sort....*Story-wise* there are no parallels with Hoffmann's works at all, for even in these anecdotal pieces Odoevskij dwells on analysis rather than on narrative. His typical procedure is to begin with a generalized essay on manners, out of which the anecdote emerges by way of example. The point of departure in most of these pieces is a topic, a motif, a situation, isolated from its original Hoffmannian context and dwelt upon for its own usefulness in making plain an issue in morals. (110-1)

Odoyevsky's Sevastyanich certainly makes the moral of his story clearer than do Scudéri and Dupin, particularly Dupin, over whom even Lacan and Derrida have struggled, unsure of whether or not a letter arrives at its destination, and whether or not it arrives with a message. The message which Hoffmann's detective tale may be implying is that goodness triumphs, or, as Kent and Knight put it, "that the 'power of blackness' may yet be overcome" (*Selected Writings of E. T. A.*

Hoffmann 1:35). Odoyevsky's tale seems more fully situated in a post-Romantic space than the other two works because of its tendency toward pessimism, or at least a reluctance to give answers. The dénouement states that even though twenty years have passed since the traveler Jean-Louis Zveuillet lost his body, the latter still questions Sevastyanich and always gets the same response: "Ah, well, inquiries are still being made" (*The Salamander and Other Gothic Tales* 25). And prior to this even Sevastyanich, the apparently self-satisfied and petty clerk, runs into problems, saying: "...there's a contradiction in this request. How did you manage to cover yourself, or pack your body into the wagon, without any hands? Oh, to hell with it! I can't make any sense of it" (24).

VIII - The Fantastic

Is it constructive to argue for differences between a high Romantic vision and one that tends toward the Biedermeier by reading texts alongside the theme of the fantastic? The argument is difficult to make, even more difficult than the previous one regarding the detective figure, but again, a few important comments should result. Kent and Knight suggest that Hoffmann's "The Mines of Falun" (1816) "is a marvel of the fantastic and an expression of the German romantic's conception of the miner as a man of almost superhuman quality because he has access to secrets hidden from others" (*Selected Writings of E. T. A. Hoffmann* 1:33). Cornwell believes that Odoyevsky's "The Cosmorama" (1839), apart from being comparable to Borges' "The Aleph" in which there is also found "one of the points in space containing all points," is Odoyevsky's "most full-blown romantic tale: perhaps this is why, from its original publication in 1840, it had to wait until 1988 for a reprinting (even Odoevsky himself unaccountably omitted it from his 1844 *Sochineniia* [*Compositions*]" (*Vladimir Odoevsky and Romantic Poetics* 151). Cornwell elaborates:

> It includes as full a gamut of occult and Gothic paraphernalia as may be encountered in any work of Russian romanticism: the walking dead, crime and torture, amorous intrigue, second sight [as in "The Aleph"], supernatural arson and spontaneous human combustion. This grotesque phantasmagoria is, however, skillfully interwoven between vision and 'reality,' accompanied with a slight edge of undercutting irony. Indeed,...it cannot be conclusively explained in terms of madness or dream (although insanity remains one strongly plausible interpretation): riddles still remain, as we are warned in the 'publisher's preface,' not least the mysterious personalities of Doctor Bin and the unfortunate Sophia (the evolution of whose name from 'Sonia' is undoubtedly to be seen in occult terms). (151-2)

Mabbott says that Poe's "Ligeia" (1838) "is a masterpiece of [his] elaborate early style, surpassing the longer narratives written earlier, and to be surpassed, if at all, only by 'The Fall of the House of Usher.' Poe himself recognized its excellence: as late as August 9, 1846, he wrote to Philip Pendleton Cooke, "Ligeia' may be called my *best* tale'; and writing to Duyckinck, January 8, 1846, he mentioned it as 'undoubtedly the best story I have written'" (*Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe* 2:305-6). Mabbott also says that on "the copy of the *Broadway Journal* he [Poe] gave to Mrs. Whitman in 1848 he wrote that the story was suggested by a dream, like the poem 'To Helen Whitman' he had sent her, and added, 'Observe the eyes in both tale and poem.' It is possible that he meant a

vivid daydream, for he may have catered to the lady's known love of the mystical" (2:306). Odoyevsky, similarly, in "The Cosmorama," seems to have been catering to the taste of Countess *Dodo* Rostopchina, to whom the tale is dedicated and who, apart "from her social and literary concerns,...was interested in occult matters..." (Cornwell, *The life, times and milieu of V. F. Odoyevsky* 268-9). To return to Poe, Mabbott elaborates on "Ligeia" as follows:

> We cannot doubt that the author intended a story of real magic, as the pentagonal room would suggest. Of course, he did not expect readers to believe the story after they put it down; he wanted temporary suspension of disbelief during its perusal. Reviewing Bird's *Sheppard Lee* in the *Messenger* for September 1836 he [Poe] had named three wholly incredible notions acceptable in tales of wonder—an invisible person, the elixir of life, and the Wandering Jew. He used the first two, and perhaps the third, in "Ligeia."...It is never clear whether the disembodied spirit of Ligeia influenced her husband's mind and led him to seek out the weak Rowena, or whether Ligeia told anyone her true name. The red liquid is not poison, but the *elixir vitae*, the color of which mystical writers believe to be that of a ruby. (*Poe* 2:307-8)

"The Mines of Falun," "The Cosmorama," and "Ligeia" may be able to yield even more things than suggested by Kent and Knight, Cornwell, and Mabbott, respectively. Reading the tales alongside the theme of the fantastic seems a logical enough endeavor, particularly because Cornwell himself says, summarizing Odoyevsky's tale, that "riddles still remain, as we are warned in the 'publisher's preface'" (*Vladimir Odoevsky and Romantic Poetics* 152). Tzvetan Todorov in fact defines the fantastic as occupying "the duration of this uncertainty. Once we choose one answer or the other, we leave the fantastic for a neighboring genre, the uncanny or the marvelous. The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event" (*The Fantastic* 25). Todorov elaborates on his definition:

> The fantastic requires the fulfillment of three conditions. First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader's role is so to speak entrusted to a character, and at the same time the hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the themes of the work—in the case of naive reading, the actual reader identifies himself with the character. Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as "poetic" interpretations. These three requirements do not have an equal value. The first and the third actually constitute the genre; the second may not be fulfilled. Nonetheless, most examples satisfy all three conditions. (33)

This is not to say that there are no loopholes in Todorov's argument. At one point, he suggests that the fantastic is "located on the frontier of two genres, the marvelous and the uncanny, [and is therefore not] an autonomous genre" (41), yet at another point, he says that "the uncanny is not a

clearly delimited genre, unlike the fantastic," because the former's definition is "broad and vague, [much like] the genre which it describes" (46). Todorov argues, in connection with this:

> The literature of horror in its pure state belongs to the uncanny—...The uncanny realizes,...only one of the conditions of the fantastic: the description of certain reactions, especially of fear....The other series of elements that provoke the sense of the uncanny is not linked to the fantastic but to what we might call "an experience of limits," which characterizes the whole of Poe's *oeuvre*....As a rule, we do not find the fantastic in Poe's works, in the strict sense,...His tales almost all derive their effect from the uncanny, and several from the marvelous. Yet Poe remains very close to the authors of the fantastic both in his themes and in the techniques that he applies....[and also] Poe originated the detective story or murder mystery, and this relationship [with the uncanny] is not a matter of chance. (47-9)

I believe that Poe's "Ligeia" can still be read in relation to the fantastic, and I have referred to the latter as a theme while Todorov interprets it as a genre that is not autonomous, but then again, he also suggests this of the uncanny and marvelous. Todorov says:

> There exists, finally, a form of the marvelous in the pure state which—just as in the case of the uncanny in the pure state—has no distinct frontiers....In the case of the marvelous, supernatural elements provoke no particular reaction either in the characters or in the implicit reader. It is not an attitude toward the events described which characterizes the marvelous, but the nature of these events....We shall not consider it here:...because the aspiration to the marvelous, as an anthropological phenomenon, exceeds the context of a study limited to literary aspects. (53-7)

Todorov's argument is nonetheless helpful if kept in mind while reading texts in relation to the fantastic, primarily because it shows the close proximity between terms like uncanny, marvelous, and fantastic, which, I have to say, does not seem to have been his primary purpose. Todorov suggests that some of these terms can exist in pure states, that some are on the border of other genres and are not autonomous, that others cannot be easily defined as autonomous because of their all-encompassing nature, like the marvelous, and so on.

Todorov's definition of the fantastic, among other things, overlaps with Freud's explanation of the uncanny in his 1919 article of that name. Freud suggests that "Hoffmann is in literature the unrivalled master of conjuring up the uncanny" (*Sigmund Freud: Collected Papers* 4:386). His definition of the term seems half-way between Todorov's own definitions of the fantastic and uncanny. This ambiguity is largely the result of Freud's tripartite elaboration on the word. First of all, the uncanny is tied to a sense of uncertainty, as defined by E. Jentsch in his "Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen," and this comes closest to Todorov's explication of the fantastic (4:369). Freud

elaborates: "We find in the story of the Sand-Man the...theme upon which Jentsch lays stress, of a doll that appears to be alive. Jentsch believes that a particularly favourable condition for awakening uncanny sensations is created when there is intellectual uncertainty whether an object is alive or not, and when an inanimate object becomes too much like an animate one" (4:385). Secondly, Freud links the uncanny with "the child's dread in relation to its castration-complex" (4:385), and this moves away from Todorov's fantastic: "...something uncanny is directly attached to the figure of the Sand-Man, that is, to the idea of being robbed of one's eyes;...Jentsch's point of an intellectual uncertainty has nothing to do with this effect. Uncertainty whether an object is living or inanimate, which we must admit in regard to the doll Olympia, is quite irrelevant in connection with this other, more striking instance of uncanniness" (4:382). And thirdly, Freud links the uncanny with anything that "reminds us of...inner *repetition-compulsion*..." (4:391), and with "repression, that necessary condition for enabling a primitive feeling to recur in the shape of an uncanny effect" (4:396). This last suggestion comes closest to Lacan's and Derrida's quarrel over the nature of repetition in Poe's "The Purloined Letter." Of course, while Derrida ties repetition to structural effects, Freud, like Lacan, links it to a more classic idea of repression. Some confusion inevitably results when comparing Freud's concept of the uncanny to Todorov's elaboration on the fantastic. Freud's main purpose in "The 'Uncanny'" is "to investigate the subject of aesthetics" as "a psychoanalyst" (4:368). Todorov's main point is to differentiate between the fantastic and other genres. I am certainly not intending that my argument duplicate Freud's analysis but I am also not intending that it reproduce Todorov's genre study, and this is why I have loosely referred to the fantastic as a theme against which Hoffmann's, Odoyevsky's, and Poe's tales can be read, tales which may or may not fully ascribe to the fantastic but approximate such an idea thematically by doing variations on it and hence, differentiating between their own paradigms.

Todorov's attempt to distinguish between the fantastic per se and other related terms seems to acquire more relevance for a reading of Romantic and post-Romantic texts when we frame such an attempt within the larger idea that there is a difference between what is known as the short story and the *Märchen* (Sándor 265):

> The Serapion Brethren [of Hoffmann], talking about Märchen as an art form, make the point that the miraculous, 'das Märchenhafte,' should be placed in actual life....Hoffmann asserts that the miraculous must not be confused with the fanciful,...in Hoffmann's usage 'the miraculous,' as distinct from 'the fanciful,' is just another expression for 'poesy' or 'spirit' or 'the romantic.' Märchen are meant to present a totality, placing man in the midst of the whole nature....[Goethe in contrast] separates the imagination from truth, thus making the Märchen a work of caprice, of fancy....Novalis [on the other hand] seems to have a concept very close to Hoffmann's,.... (265-9)

Elis Fröbom is certainly placed "in the midst of the whole nature" when he becomes a miner, and the entire tale, "The Mines of Falun," seems to conform to a strict definition of *Märchen*, in Hoffmann's sense. The question I want to pose therefore, and which will acquire more significance as the analysis progresses, is as follows: Is a shift in paradigm from high Romanticism to something approximating a Biedermeier indicated, among other things, by the more literary shift from a strict concept of *Märchen* to the broader, more eclectic one of the short story, as practiced by Odoyevsky and Poe, and which allows for things other than Todorov's idea of a semi-permeable fantastic to emerge? Todorov himself came close to acknowledging a mixing of genres in Poe's case (*The Fantastic* 47-9), but this, I will add, is also a mixing of themes, contained within the loose parameters of what is commonly known as the short story, particularly within Poe's 1842 definition of the short story that only really calls for a unified impression, "a certain unique or single *effect*" (*Poe* 2:xviii). This is more flexible than Hoffmann's definition of *Märchen* but also more flexible than our own contemporary definition of the short story, Poe having frequently combined the essay or analytical sketch with the short story, as in the case of "The Imp of the Perverse" (1845), and Odoyevsky having frequently combined the anecdote with the short story, sometimes even experimenting with the fragment tale, as in the case of "The Avenger" and "Cecilia" in *Russian Nights*.

Hoffmann's concept of *Märchen* pushes the miraculous into the realm of life, and through that placement a sense of higher meaning is attained, as it is in Elis Fröbom's case, because it is through the guidance of the mysterious miner Torbern, and later, through the further inspiration of Ulla Dahlsjö, that he finds his true calling. It is quite a strict recipe, where narrative events are tightly interwoven. Early on, Torbern says to the young man: "I have revealed to you, Elis Fröbom, all the splendors of a calling for which nature has actually destined you....take care,...Be faithful

to the [mineral] Queen to whom you have given yourself" (*Selected Writings of E. T. A. Hoffmann* 1:194-6). And Elis also has a mysterious dream which further solidifies his calling, one in which he cries: "'Down—down to you!'...and [throws] himself down with outspread arms onto the crystal ground. But it dissolved beneath him and he hovered in the shimmering air" (1:195). Later on, while Elis is working in the mine shafts, we encounter the following passage: "Elis thought of the fair Ulla. He saw her form hovering like a shining angel above him, and he forgot all the horrors of the abyss, all the difficulties of the toilsome work. It was now clear in his mind that only if he dedicated himself to mining...would his sweetest hopes perhaps one day be fulfilled,..." (1:202-3). It is soon after this that Elis is called a "cheat" by Torbern (1:204), and the chief foreman responds to his grievances as follows: "...that was old Torbern whom you met, and I now realize that what we relate about him here is more than a legend. More than a hundred years ago there was a miner here in Falun by the name of Torbern....he constantly prophesied that a disaster would occur if it were not true love for marvelous rocks and metals that impelled the miner to work" (1:204-5). This explanation by the foreman, rather than exposing Torbern's supernatural nature (because the foreman may himself be superstitious), only cements the tension which was previously built up through Elis' on-and-off encounters with Torbern, and thereby, it comes close to fulfilling a part of Todorov's definition of the fantastic, that hesitancy is maintained by the character, in this case Elis, in relation to something which seems supernatural, and that this hesitancy may also be extended to the reader.

What the foreman's pseudo-explication of Torbern does is draw attention to the previous unanswered questions which the text raises, questions which are made possible, in part, by the strict form of Hoffmann's *Märchen*, which aims at higher, "poetic truth" (Sándor 266). Elis is engaging in a clear program, to become a miner, but the reasons behind such a program remain elusive, or are made so. Elis believes, after first seeing Ulla, that it was she who "offered him her hand to save him in that fateful dream" (*Hoffmann* 1:200). It also could have been the hand of his dead mother (1:192), or even the hand of Torbern, in more pleasant disguise, as a "charming young woman" (1:196). What is made obvious in the text is that after the foreman mentions Torb-

ern, Elis shifts into his final and deepest stage as a miner, as if the foreman's mentioning of Torbern was an incantation, but scripted into the tale at just the right moment, so that its significance cannot be fully unravelled either, because immediately after this episode, Elis sees "the rich merchant Eric Olawsen" wooing Ulla and then he dedicates his life to mining, solely for its own sake (1:206). But, in keeping with Todorov's fantastic, the foreman's mentioning of Torbern does not completely lose its presence owing to the Olawsen episode. Eventually, Elis and Ulla are to be wedded, and Olawsen is forgotten. Torbern is also forgotten, but *only in name*. When Ulla speaks to Elis about the wedding, he begins "to speak of the splendor of the shaft, of the immeasurably rich treasures which lay concealed there, and he [becomes] entangled in such strange, incomprehensible speeches..." (1:209). The final parts of the tale seem to erode the boundary between miner, alchemist, and metallurgist, and a synthesis occurs, which is in keeping with a high Romantic vision, a vision that is not destroyed by the dénouement, because the bodies of Ulla and Elis are "placed in the Kopparberg Church, where the couple were to have been wedded fifty years before" (1:212). And more importantly, when the mine caves in, Elis dies a man possessed, possibly by Torbern's spirit, but also, rather paradoxically, a man at peace with his possession. He must, at all cost, commemorate his wedding with the unearthing of something resembling an alchemist's stone: "Down in the shaft the cherry red sparkling almadine lies enclosed in chlorite and mica, on which is inscribed the chart of our life....and when we, united in true love, look into its radiant light, we can clearly see how our inner beings are intertwined with the marvelous branch that is growing from the Queen's heart in the center of the earth" (1:210). It is red in color, like the ruby drops in Poe's "Ligeia," symbolic, as Mabbott says, not of poison, but of the *elixir vitae* (*Poe* 2:308). The synthesis which seems to occur in the later stages of the tale, at a profound, even literally subterranean level, is more a product of the Hoffmannian *Märchen* than of Poe's loosely defined short story, where a required, single effect does not necessarily imply synthesis. Elis goes so far in his synthesis that he also becomes representative of it, muck like Gluck, or the madman who thinks he is Gluck but is nonetheless in unison with Gluck's repertoire (*Hoffmann* 1:58-9): "Then one day miners who were investigating an opening between two shafts found the corpse of a young miner

lying in sulfuric acid in a bore nine hundred feet deep. When they brought the body to the surface, it appeared to be petrified" (1:211).

Passage believes that in Odoyevsky's "The Cosmorama," "the revelations of the cosmorama [a magical toy], in so far as we learn of them, are figments of a philosophy to which Schelling contributed considerably but Hoffmann nothing at all" (113). Cornwell suggests that the cosmorama "is only the starting point for the visions of the protagonist Vladimir, which in fact reach their most extravagant Aleph-like quality after the destruction of the allegedly magical device. The scope of Vladimir's perception, both of the dissolution of space and time and the apprehension of an inner or parallel world, may be seen as counterpoint to the purely mechanistic powers of Kipriano, the Improvisor from *Russkie nochi* [*Russian Nights*],..." (*Vladimir Odoevsky and Romantic Poetics* 151). Cornwell believes that Odoyevsky's "study of such mystical thinkers as Jacob Boehme, John Pordage, Swedenborg and Saint-Martin" is represented in this story (151). I believe that the tale goes in a different direction than Hoffmann's concept of *Märchen*, which is close to Novalis' (Sándor 269). Sándor suggests that "Tieck with his tragic Märchen, pointing to Clemens Brentano, stands apart from Goethe and Novalis and Hoffmann. With its allegoric transcendent quality, he [Tieck] can offer no...help for the understanding of Hoffmann" (273-4). Sándor says that Tieck "adds allegory, transcendence, to chaos in order to have actuality" (273). Odoyevsky may be adding allegory to "The Cosmorama" through the problematic extra vision which the magical toy gives to Vladimir, but this allegory seems to lack the transcendence it may have for Tieck. Vladimir is already looking into the magical box during his childhood, and the images either have an obvious face value, or conversely, are pure allegories since detached from the real world and located in an imaginary realm: "...[I] caught sight of a series of beautiful, richly turned-out rooms, around which there walked richly dressed people who were unknown to me. Everywhere lamps and mirrors were shining, as though it were some sort of a celebration. But imagine to my surprise when I recognised my aunt in one of the further rooms. Beside her stood a man and he was passionately kissing her hand, while my aunt was embracing Uncle. However, this man was not Uncle:..." (*The Salamander and Other Gothic Tales* 91).

Instead of linking the chaos of the tale with a higher truth, the allegory only points back to Vladimir's world which is falling apart at the dénouement: "I have buried myself alive in a small, remote village, in the depths of an impenetrable forest, not known to anyone. I am afraid to meet anyone,...The fatal door has been opened: I, a denizen of this world, belong to the other one; I am an actor there against my will; there I—dreadful to relate—there I am an *instrument of torture*" (132)! If allegory points to a higher truth, in another possible world, then it points only to a continuation of Vladimir's present existence, since, through the extra vision acquired with the magical toy, he is already a part of both worlds, real and allegorical, and is therefore an *instrument of torture* in the parallel, allegorical one. Allegory collapses here into lessons *about* rather than *of* reality, since it resides outside of reality, in the parallel world induced by the cosmorama, and this, while slightly pushing Odoyevsky's "The Cosmorama" closer to Tieck's than to Hoffmann's and Novalis' concept of *Märchen*, still, I will say, pushes it even closer to a looser definition, not of *Märchen* but of the short story, where allegory may be present but lacks its previous Romantic transcendence, a transcendence displayed by Hoffmann and Novalis, but in mystical rather than Tieck's allegorical terms (Sándor 273). Poe, reviewing Hawthorne's tales in *Godey's Lady's Book* for November 1847, suggests, indirectly explicating Vladimir's acquired parallel vision, that allegory interferes with "unity of effect" but is nonetheless available where "the suggested meaning runs through the obvious one in a *very* profound undercurrent so as never to show itself unless *called* to the surface" (*Poe* 2:xxvi). Gadamer also elaborates on the role of allegory, as it passed through Romanticism and beyond:

> With the rupture of this tradition [the reconciliation of Christian and Classical culture of which the Baroque was the last universal form] allegory too was finished. For the moment art freed itself from all dogmatic bonds and could be defined by the unconscious production of genius, allegory inevitably became aesthetically questionable....we see Goethe's work in aesthetics having a strong influence in the direction of making the symbolic a positive, and the allegorical a negative, artistic concept....[and so] The foundation of nineteenth-century aesthetics was the freedom of the symbol-making activity of the mind. But is that a sufficient foundation? Is this symbol-making activity not also in fact limited by the continued existence of a mythical, allegorical tradition? If this is recognised, however, the contrast between symbol and allegory again becomes relative, whereas the prejudice of the aesthetics of experience made it appear absolute. Equally, the difference of the aesthetic consciousness from the mythical can hardly be considered as absolute. (Gadamer 71-2)

It is very close to Poe's definition of the short story and the ambiguous role of allegory that

Odoyevsky's tale resides, and simultaneously, in the light of such an eclectic definition, Odoyevsky's tale can also be read as recycling some of the capriciousness of Goethe's definition of *Märchen*, where imagination and truth are split from each other, and so, allegory in "The Cosmorama" seems peculiarly detached from the actual thematics, and hovers nearby. And this is delicate proof of the tale's main Biedermeier tendency, namely, toward a *derivativeness of motifs*.

Odoyevsky's tale seems, as I said, in keeping with its eclecticism, to resurrect certain aspects of Goethe's pre-Romantic definition of *Märchen*, splitting imagination from truth, but also, through that same process, it appears to arrive at a curiously ambiguous position in relation to allegory, a position similar to Poe's. The allegory is brought about by Vladimir's parallel world, the parallel vision, but that allegory never actually has the strength to bring its supposed truth into the reality outside of the cosmorama. Many years pass, and Vladimir encounters the cosmorama once again, soon after being reacquainted with his dead uncle's friend, the peculiar Doctor Bin:

> "You see, you see!" I said to the doctor, pointing to the glass, "do you see yourself there, and me?" With these words, I went to put the lid on the box, when at that moment the words being pronounced in that strange scene became audible to me; when the doctor took hold of my hand and started feeling my pulse, saying "what's wrong with you?," his double suddenly smiled.
>
> "Don't believe him," he said, "or, to put it a better way, don't believe me in your world. There I don't know myself what I do, but here I understand my actions which, in your world, are presented in the form of *unconscious motivation*. There I gave you a toy, without myself knowing why,...."
>
> "Do you hear, do you hear?" I said, "what are you saying there?" I cried out in horror....
>
> "Let's get out of here, my dear Vladimir Petrovich," said the real Doctor Bin, "you need a diet and your bed and it's a bit cold here: it's making my flesh creep." (*The Salamander and Other Gothic Tales* 96-7)

Only Doctor Bin's image in the cosmorama can be said to approach an allegorical status; the real Doctor Bin, as his other image says, only functions via *unconscious motivation*. But for Vladimir, of course, who looks into the cosmorama and acquires its powers, the situation is more difficult to account for. He can perhaps see himself in the cosmorama, his allegorical self, but outside of the magical box, he too is something else. He is a man, as the story implies, who mentally enacts the struggle between allegory and motivation, and this, in part, explains why the power of the cosmorama remains with him even after it is destroyed, interestingly enough, on the orders of Doctor

Bin (97).

Vladimir's struggle between allegory and motivation is carried through the entire tale, but is concentrated around two figures, his distant cousin Sonia, who lives with his elderly aunt, and the Countess Eliza B., of whom I will speak later. Sonia is presented initially as naive and innocent, and the aunt complains that she prefers to read books rather than work: "Now, perhaps you [Vladimir] will tell her what sort of work reading is for a girl, and it's all in German—she had a German governess [Louisa], you see" (100). Vladimir then questions Sonia if she has "read Goethe, Schiller and Shakespeare in Schlegel's translation," and he offers to bring her the books, upon which the aunt complains: "...goodness knows what you will load her up with,...I can't understand what consolation people find in books. When I was young, I asked once, which was the best book in the world? I was told *Rossiada*, by Senator Kheraskov. So I set about reading it, but it was so boring,...[and] I thought to myself that if the best book in the world is so boring, what must the rest of them be like" (101)? This portion can even be read as a parody of Pushkin's "The Queen of Spades," where, among other things, the Countess doubts the existence of Russian novels, and Hermann, a Russianized German, believes in the Countess' mystical ability to influence a card game. However, subtle references to Pushkin are left far behind soon after this, when Sonia becomes Sophia and remains so in the tale (101), a transformation that may be interpreted in occult terms, as Cornwell suggested. Several days later, Sophia returns the books to Vladimir, with her notations inside: "In the Shakespeare, she had noted the sentence: 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.' In Goethe's *Faust* only that short scene where Faust and Mephistopheles are galloping over the deserted plain was marked" (102). Vladimir questions her about this and she asks him: "...he [Mephistopheles] chases Faust, tells him that they are casting spells there, but is Mephistopheles really afraid of witchcraft?...He is afraid—it's not witchcraft here; here it's something quite different.... Oh, if Faust had only stopped!..." (102). Vladimir responds: "There is much that is strange in you. You have a peculiar sort of view of things" (103). Sophia says later: "...sometimes there is something inside me which speaks in me; I lend an ear to it and just speak, without thinking—and often what I say I don't

understand myself" (103). This disturbs Vladimir, who responds: "That's not good. You should always think about what you are saying and say only what you clearly understand..." (103). Through contact with the cosmorama, Vladimir now cannot help struggling between two worlds, one of allegory, the other of unconscious motivation, as Doctor Bin's image terms it. It is entirely possible that Sophia represents unconscious motivation in its pure form, she being one of the figures whom Vladimir has not seen previously in the cosmorama. In other words, she has no allegorical side. Vladimir even tells her that she is "leaning towards mysticism" (104). But this is more problematic than illustrated so far because Vladimir does eventually see Sophia in one of his visions, covered with a "greenish steam," her face with a "distorted look," all reminding him of her "mysterious actions," the "double-meaninged words" of a "cunning demon [which] was hidden in her under a mask of innocence..." (120-1).

Sophia's role in the tale is ambiguous. Her role might even be doubled, since she is apparently an innocent figure, serving as amusement, "but that was all," as Vladimir says at one point (106), and yet her innocence can also be camouflage, and Vladimir does point out her tendency toward mysticism. Amid this confusion of the plot, where Sophia may or may not represent innocence and purity, the Countess Eliza B. enters. The protagonist meets her somewhere at a ball and he says: "...[she] stopped me in my tracks....her face was so familiar to me that I almost bowed to her,...[but she had never] entered my circle of acquaintances....[and yet she too] confessed to me that my face, as well, had seemed familiar to her..." (107). Indeed, her face is familiar because Vladimir previously saw her in the cosmorama: "I was standing beside a beautiful woman and saying to her the most tender things, which in a toneless whisper reverberated in my ear..." (95). Why does his face seem familiar to her? Doctor Bin mentions at one point that cosmoramas are now "in all the toyshops. That's the dissemination of enlightenment" (95)! The Countess and protagonist seem to be on the verge of a love affair when something unexpected pops up: "It had entered neither of our heads, until that minute, to recall that the Countess had a husband" (108)! It is tempting to read this remark as a condensed, perhaps Biedermeier caricature of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, but once again, as in the case of Sophia, where elements of Pushkin's

"The Queen of Spades" are present, the motifs are too derivative, and too layered, in order for me to say something definitive. Vladimir is given a lucky break, for the moment, because the Count dies suddenly, and Doctor Bin explains: "...a nervous fever.... He neglected it, thought he could get to Moscow..." (110). Soon after this the Countess and protagonist exchange their "first kiss" (111), but this is followed by the return of the Count during one of their meetings. Vladimir says: "I heard incoherent tales of how the Count had come to life, how he had risen from his coffin, how he had encountered the sacristan in the doorway, how the doctor [Bin?] had helped him.... Thus it was not an apparition, but reality" (114)! This is too much for the protagonist and he seems to begin hallucinating, and remembers that this is the "phantasmagorical scene" which he saw earlier in the cosmorama, where he is "beside [Eliza]" (117). The reality of his current, shocking situation seems to serve as a bridge for his explanation of the cosmoramic vision which he had previously. At this point, he mentions details which he saw in the cosmorama that were not mentioned previously. He saw Doctor Bin's double and "recognised the image of Sophia, but only for an instant, and this image seemed to [him] a distorted one..." (117). This concentration of images in the tale can be read as a false climax. Why? Because the phantasmagoria, particularly the Count's possible vampirism, is cut by Doctor Bin, who wakes Vladimir, telling him that he had fainted: "...you took fright, thinking that a dead man was on the move..." (117). Apparently, everything in the past seven pages, since the Count *died*, including the exchange of first kisses between the Countess and Vladimir, has been a dream. The Count has recovered from his illness, and the relationship between Eliza and Vladimir remains Platonic.

Everything in the past seven pages can be read within the confines of Todorov's definition of the fantastic, where there must be a hesitancy and inability to distinguish between the real and supernatural. Doctor Bin's waking of Vladimir ends the fantastic episode, and Todorov's definition implies that the presence of some episodes of the fantastic in a tale does not indicate that the tale is actually fantastic, because hesitancy must be maintained throughout (*The Fantastic* 42). I suggest that this hesitancy is maintained fairly well in "The Cosmorama" because, to use the current example, even though Bin has cancelled the possible vampirism of the Count by saying that

he was not really dead, later in the tale, Vladimir is invited to the theatre by a friend who believes that "amusement, society, cold baths," and mesmerism would do him some good (*The Salamander and Other Gothic Tales* 122). This friend wants to cure him of his nervous affliction, the "little devils" which keep appearing in his mind (122), and Vladimir once again hesitates:

> Meanwhile we had arrived. There were few people yet in the theatre; the box beside our's remained unoccupied. On the poster in front of me, I read: 'The Vampire: an opera by Marschner.' I did not know the work and it was with curiosity that I listened to the first notes of the overture. Suddenly an involuntary movement made me look around; the door in the neighbouring box creaked; I looked—and in walked my Eliza. She looked at me, bowed amicably, and her pale face flushed. Her husband walked in behind her. I seemed to detect a whiff of the grave, but this was a flight of the imagination. I had not seen him in the two months or so since his revival....In that part of the opera where the vampire asks a passer-by to turn him towards the shining of the moon, which will reanimate him, the Count shuddered convulsively. (123)

Technically, then, we are still within the realm of Todorov's fantastic, but this does not necessarily imply that "The Cosmorama" is closer to the Hoffmannian *Märchen* than to Poe's definition of the short story. The fantastic is fairly well maintained here, but it seems enfeebled by the larger, meta-operation that is occurring in the tale. What do I mean by meta-operation? I mean to say that Vladimir's personal struggle between allegory and motivation, between the two worlds which the cosmorama has made possible, is still the primary framework through which the narrative is handled, a framework in which allegory is present but its role is ambiguous, and Poe allows for this also. The fantastic is as well enfeebled because, alongside the jarring struggle between allegory and motivation, there is present, as I mentioned, a possibly Biedermeier derivativeness of motifs. There are subtle, parodic echoes of Goethe and Pushkin here, and perhaps Polidori (vampirism), wrapped up in Vladimir's own struggle to see where he fits into the game of things, and wrapped up in such a way that "The Cosmorama," contrary to Cornwell's suggestion that it is a full-blown Romantic tale, is probably foreshadowing existentialism, the "experience of limits" which Todorov says is also characteristic of Poe's oeuvre, and is closer to the uncanny than the fantastic (*The Fantastic* 47-8). Todorov suggests that Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" is "an instance of the uncanny bordering on the fantastic" (47). It might be the case that the uncanny actually frames the fantastic in Odoyevsky's tale, and this would be in keeping with its derivativeness of motifs and its parodic layering, where fantastic episodes are framed under questionable circumstances,

much like the pseudo-love-affair between Eliza and Vladimir.

Several months pass before the Countess promises Vladimir an actual assignation (*The Salamander and Other Gothic Tales* 124). It is supposed to take place on New Year's Eve, at ten o'clock, and she says: "There are some very intelligent people,...who believe in omens...for example, my husband never misses a New Year's Eve reception, so as not to miss playing cards. He says that on that day he always feels an unusual sharpness,..." (125). In the meantime, leading up to the assignation, Vladimir has been providing himself with books on magnetism: "Puységur, Deleuze, Wolfart and Keiser never left my table" (124). Once more, as with the previous exchange of kisses, it is not possible to see the fiction or reality of the situation. As eight o'clock strikes on New Year's Eve, Vladimir falls "on the divan in complete exhaustion..." (126). Supposedly, he is woken by the crashing of a huge bronze clock at his feet, while a clock in *another* room strikes twelve on the dial, and realizing that he is late, he gallops off to the Countess, who shrieks: "So late! The Count is due to return soon; we have lost irrecoverable time" (126)! Vladimir describes Eliza as "so seductively attractive" and elaborates: "We did not recall where we were or what was happening to us, and when Eliza in a state of amnesia languished on my breast...the door was *not opened* [my italics], but her husband appeared beside us" (127). It is possible that the protagonist is once again having one of his cosmoramic visions, being a participant in the surreal scene, especially because the Count magically appears without opening a door and the clock striking twelve, which Vladimir hears, strikes twelve in another, parallel room. It seems that he is once again in the realm of complete, sterile allegory, which has a reality all its own that may very easily be mistaken for real reality, as it was in the previous phantasmagoric scene, until Doctor Bin woke Vladimir up. Once again, the vision approaches Todorov's fantastic:

> He [the Count] was as pale as death, his hair was bristling on his head as though electrified;...he grabbed us both by the hand...his face grimaced...his cheeks turned crimson...his eyes lit up...His hand was burning my hand...another instant and he would be irridescent as hot iron.... Eliza screamed...the furniture started smoking...a blue flame ran over all the dead man's limbs...amid the sanguinary brilliance were revealed the white features of his bones.... Eliza's dress started to burn; in vain did I want to extract her hand from that revengeful clasp...the curtains blazed up, as did the flowers and the pictures; the floor flared up, and the ceiling, and a thick smoke filled the whole room.... 'The children! the children!' cried Eliza in a desperate voice. 'They're coming with us too!' replied the dead man with a raucous guffaw...I noticed in front of me a sort of white cloud...the face of Sophia gleamed within this cloud...I

> involuntarily followed her.... Where the apparition flew, there the flames bent back and fresh, fragrant air revived my breathing.... (127-8)

And once again, Vladimir is awakened by Doctor Bin: "...I was lying in bed, without the strength to utter a word....'The crisis has ended! There is hope' said someone beside me. I recognised the voice of Doctor Bin" (128).

As Todorov suggests of Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," the uncanny is here pushed to border on the fantastic, and I will say, may even spill over into it, particularly because after waking up, Vladimir finds a "black stain" on his hand whose source he cannot remember (128). And things are indeed problematic, because when asking once about the Count, Vladimir is told by a friend that on "New Year's Eve [after bringing home a sum of money from a card game]...a fire broke out in his house; everything was burned: he himself, his wife, the children, the house—as though they had never been" (128). Asking about Sophia once, he is told by Bin that she died on New Year's Eve due to a bizarre illness: "...it was as though all her body had suffered burns...[but] she did not forget you: she tore out a sheet from her note book and asked me to give it to you, in her memory....[it read] 'The highest form of love is to suffer for another...'" (129). These events, which apparently occurred, push the tale very close to the fantastic, but Sophia's citation undermines that closeness, because, as she has suffered for the protagonist, who once mentioned to himself that he is not able to love her (106), so too has he suffered for the Countess Eliza, who may only love him in the allegorical dreamworld where he seems to encounter her, where she "languished on his breast." There is a framing, a multiplication of the fantastic occurring which undermines its presence as a monomyth that holds the narrative together, because the highest form of love is to suffer for another, and another, and so on, and more importantly, the fact that Eliza and Sophia both die under mysterious circumstances undercuts the self-contained allegorical world in which Vladimir is seen mostly to function, bringing him back to reality, in which he flees to a "remote village, in the depths of an impenetrable forest,..." (132). Perhaps his unconscious motivation has gotten the better of him and there has occurred something nastier here than the double suicide of the Marchesa di Mentoni and the Byronic Englishman in Poe's "The Assignation"? Vladimir's final suggestion, that he is an instrument of torture in the parallel world, gives

the tale a rather cozy and veiled conclusion.

If I am to give an overall picture of "The Cosmorama," I have to say that the uncanny frames the fantastic *twice*, as timed by Doctor Bin's two wake-up calls, much in the way that the cosmorama has divided Vladimir's life into two worlds, one of surreal allegory, the other of real reality that functions via unconscious motivation, as one of the Doctor Bins mentioned. It is interesting that the allegorical, surreal side of the protagonist's life seems more symbolically real, possibly because it is sterile, and therefore concentrated into a paranormal vision which he cannot reach, like the assignation with the Countess Eliza B., which must remain hypothetical in order to remain pure. This gives the tale a highly inorganic, synthetic effect, which may even be masking something more violent and monstrous at its core, in the way that the narrator of Poe's "The Black Cat" rationalizes murder, transforming it into something homely and convenient, very unlike the mystical unison that Elis Fröbom goes through in unearthing special minerals with which to commemorate his wedding, in "The Mines of Falun." Vladimir's pseudo-assignation pushes Odoyevsky's tale towards a more rigid kind of dualism that is seen perhaps, as Sándor suggests, in Tieck's concept of *Märchen*, but that is also seen, more strongly, in Poe's non-transcendental dualism, as represented most obviously by "William Wilson." Odoyevsky seems to arrive at this non-transcendental dualism, where the role of allegory is ambiguous, as it is for Poe, not so much through a reworking of Tieck's as of Goethe's concept of *Märchen*, where imagination is split from reality, but this is only possible because "The Cosmorama" approximates Poe's more eclectic definition of the short story. In "The Cosmorama," there is a reworking of *Märchen* within the looser framework of short story, as there is a multiple framing of the fantastic by the uncanny, or in other words, a containing of Romantic excess within existential limitations.

Does Poe's "Ligeia" also go in a different direction than Hoffmann's concept of *Märchen*, approximating the derivativeness of motifs in "The Cosmorama" and the framing of Romantic excess within an Odoyevskian horizon of limitation? It is more difficult to argue this for Poe's tale because, rather than framing the fantastic within the uncanny, it seems to use Todorov's fantastic per se as *the frame*, and creates thematic variations within it. In this way, "Ligeia" appears on the

surface more obviously high Romantic than Odoyevsky's tale, illustrating, among other things, the concept of metempsychosis, but its details may be less so. I mentioned that "The Cosmorama" frames fantastic episodes within questionable circumstances, leading to such incidents as the pseudo-assignation between Eliza and Vladimir. In "Ligeia," in contrast, fantastic circumstances appear to contain questionable episodes, as when Rowena is finally transformed into Ligeia, quite literally before our eyes, and this can undermine a critical reading of the text. Such variations on Romantic devices and ideas do fit within Poe's definition of the short story, as does, to an extent, Odoyevsky's tale. However, such variations, because they are located in a tale that is presented as fantastic per se, cloud the possible proximity of "Ligeia" to the idea of a Biedermeier. And critics have certainly disagreed over the intention of this story, whether it is serious or parodic, Romantic or satirical of Romanticism. Mrs. Whitman, for her part, praises "Ligeia" for its imagery, metempsychosis, and "psychal attraction which transcends the dissolution of the mortal body..." (qtd. in Carlson 176). D. H. Lawrence, in contrast, compares the narrator to a vampire of the mind, whose deep analysis leaves Ligeia passive with horror, where she is "just a phenomenon with which Poe strives in ill-omened love....She is not a woman. She is just a re-agent, a reacting force, chimerical almost," consumed by inordinate love, not "creative love" in which each soul is recognized by the other (qtd. in Carlson 177).

Roy B. Basler, in "The Interpretation of 'Ligeia,'" disagrees with the earlier critics' blindness to the contextual emphasis of the tale on "the hero's obsession, madness, and hallucination..." (qtd. in Carlson 177). Basler believes "that the obsession with the *idée fixe* expressed in the passage from Glanville [that man dies only through weakness of will] begins with the hero himself and does not express Ligeia's belief. It is his will to conquer death that motivates the rest of the story, and not hers" (Basler 88). This echoes Lawrence's comment that Ligeia is merely there for purposes other than her own. Much of these interpretive problems are tied to the dénouement of "Ligeia," where the narrator appears to see an "enshrouded" figure advancing "bodily and palpably into the middle of the apartment," a figure who finally opens her eyes, not the blue ones of Rowena, but "the full, and the black, and the wild eyes—...of the Lady Ligeia" (*Collected Works of*

Edgar Allan Poe 2:329-30)! This conclusion bothered Philip Pendleton Cooke, to whom Poe sent a copy of the story, asking if the dénouement was intelligible. Cooke "was shocked by a violation of the ghostly proprieties...[asking himself] how the Lady Ligeia—a wandering essence—could, in quickening *the body of the Lady Rowena*...become suddenly the visible, bodily, Ligeia" (*Poe* 2:307). He wished for a more gradual change, where the "blue Saxon eye...grew daily darker..." (2:307). Poe responded on September 21, 1839, that because he had written "Morella" with a less direct conclusion, the narrator will have to be content that Ligeia does indeed stand before him: "I should have intimated that the *will* did not perfect its intention—there should have been a relapse...and Ligeia...should be at length entombed as Rowena....[but I] suffer 'Ligeia' to remain as it is" (2:307). Poe changed his mind in 1842, adding his poem "The Conqueror Worm" to the tale as an indication of Ligeia's feeble will, and he wrote to Cooke on August 9, 1846, saying that he had improved the tale (2:307). However, the dénouement was not altered, and Basler believes that this allows for two alternatives: "...either Poe meant the story to be read as Cooke read it, and failed to provide the sort of conclusion which he admitted was necessary, or he meant it to be read approximately as [I, Basler, have] analyzed it, and merely bowed to Cooke's criticism out of gratitude for appreciation" (Basler 93). Basler reads the conclusion skeptically, as different than that of a mere "story of the supernatural..." (95).

Richard Wilbur's comments on the tale tend to situate it within a Romantic paradigm because, while interpreting it as "an index of his [Poe's] symbolism" and saying that the "typical Poe story is, in its action, an allegory of dream-experience," which is similar to my view of "The Cosmorama," he implicitly reads "Ligeia" as a clearly transcendental piece of Romanticism (qtd. in Carlson 179-80). This view is echoed by Maurice J. Bennett, who reads the tale in a Schillerian light, saying that "Ligeia is not only a classical 'goddess of harmony' but an embodiment of the spiritual and ideal...[where] the metaphors and images that surround her concretize her as a link to Poe's conception of poetry" (qtd. in Carlson 185). The final word from this school of thought is given by David Halliburton in the first and only full-length phenomenological stud[illegible] of Poe, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Phenomenological View* (1973). Halliburton's reply is to the "ironic-satiric critics," and

he suggests that Poe's Gothic tales "are in the main serious, not comic or ironic" (qtd. in Carlson 183-4). The ironic-satiric camp would most notably include G. R. Thompson, who believes that "Poe's technique in the Gothic tales is one of 'deceptive tripleness' on the supernatural, the psychological, and the satiric-ironic levels;..." (qtd. in Carlson 183). James M. Cox also deserves mention. He countered John Lauber's "A Plea for Literalism" by reading Ligeia as the narrator's hallucination: "What the story marvelously succeeds in doing is to define the relation between the two empty traditions Poe inherited and burlesqued: the gothic world of vampires [Ligeia] and the romantic world of maidens [Rowena]" (qtd. in Carlson 181).

One of the better examples of this vein of criticism is Clark Griffith's more contextual "Poe's 'Ligeia' and the English Romantics," which allows "Ligeia" to be read as approximating the Biedermeier derivativeness of motifs which I suggested is characteristic of Odoyevsky's "The Cosmorama." The article is somewhat unfavorably dismissed by Carlson who says that "because this essay impressed only the 'irony' critics, it received no mention in Griffith's later piece on 'Poe and the Gothic'..." (178). Daniel Hoffman, forgetting the critic's name, speaks as follows:

> One scholar has recently proposed that in marrying Ligeia...the narrator commits himself to Continental Romanticism; after Ligeia's demise, when he remarries Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine, 'fair-haired and blue-eyed,' a girl apparently from Cornwall, [the] narrator succumbs to the false lure of British Romanticism; in the end, however, his first and truer love reasserts her claim upon his intellectual fealty. I admit a case can be made for this. You'd be hard put to guess how convincing that case is, but if you've recently *read* Poe's 'Ligeia,' you may feel (as I do) that this theory about its 'meaning' is too clever by half. (Hoffman 246)

Hoffman's skepticism of Griffith's interpretation is rooted in his own reading of the tale as primarily an example of Poe's inflated Romanticism: "We give 'Ligeia' enough credence not in spite of its stylistic grotesqueries but because of them. Poe...could write as clearly and as perspicuously as Defoe when he wanted to. But who would tolerate the plain style of Monsieur Dupin's sidekick in the mouth of Ligeia's husband" (258)? Hoffman suggests other proof of Poe's Romanticism, including the vague coexistence of sensuality and Platonism in "Ligeia": "...[the] delicacy, or squeamishness, fooled several generations of readers into thinking that Poe was a spiritual writer—if they didn't take him for a fiend. Of course we can now read Poe with less prejudice,...[recognizing the tale's] suppressed erotic intensity..." (261). The narrator does say at one

point: "Of all the women whom I have ever known, she, the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia, was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion" (*Poe* 2:315). These are all possible readings, but I suggest that Griffith's ironic one is equally as convincing, and allows for a more complete interpretation of "Ligeia," as an instance of Romanticism but also as a skeptical, post-Romantic reworking and layering of motifs. Griffith concludes his article by situating "Ligeia" alongside Poe's obviously satirical "How to Write a Blackwood Article," published two months later, in November of 1838, and he says:

> Mr. Blackwood…[offers] sage words of wisdom. Write many languages. Master metaphysics. Talk of the academy. Bring in the words "a priori" and "a posteriori." Stress the Germans; above all, stress the Germans. Abuse Locke, but praise Fichte, Schelling, and Kant. Make *The Sorrows of Werther* a by-word. Collectively, these are the pomposities which will reanimate the deadest of Romanticisms.…Reflecting a metaphysical beauty, discernible in nature and dreams, pondered by the student of Transcendentalism [the narrator of "Ligeia"],…[Ligeia is the] link with German Idealism. And…the "word of no meaning" has left its ineffable stamp upon Rowena. In the allegorized jest [this tale],…qualities fundamentally German do indeed take primacy over properties basically English. For Poe has compounded terror with satire, and the triumph of German sources over an English Romanticism, hopelessly uninspired without them, could hardly be more complete. (Griffith 16)

Griffith's comments can of course be touched up a bit. There is no question, in my mind, that the tale makes obvious the varieties of Romanticism. Regarding Ligeia, the narrator says: "…I believe that I met her first and most frequently in some large, old, decaying city near the Rhine.…[and] I saw that the features of Ligeia were not of a classic regularity—although I perceived that her loveliness was indeed 'exquisite,' and felt that there was much of 'strangeness' pervading it…" (*Poe* 2:310-2). After Ligeia dies, but before marrying Rowena, the narrator says: "After a few months,…of weary and aimless wandering, I purchased, and put in some repair, an abbey, which I shall not name, in one of the wildest and least frequented portions of fair England" (2:320). My idea, that "Ligeia," in contrast to "The Cosmorama," has a narrative frame that is closer to the fantastic than the uncanny, can easily accomodate for Griffith's idea of German versus English Romantic motifs. Simply put, "Ligeia" is a Germanic frame consisting of basically English episodes. There are several layers of parody occurring here. "Ligeia" is indeed written in English, and is therefore more in tune with English Romanticism by default, from a language perspective. If the narrative frame is fantastic, Germanic (and an argument for frames is by nature vague), perhaps

this is a further parody on studies such as mine, which attempt to distinguish between sources, influences, and motifs, and have to rely on invisible frames in order to do so. "Ligeia" can be read not only as a reworking of Continental and English Romanticisms, but as a parody of Emersonian Transcendentalism, particularly the concept of an *oversoul*, which Ligeia very easily represents. This is most ironic because the tale does cater, as Mabbott suggested, to Mrs. Whitman's taste for the mystical and transcendental, and Poe sent a copy of the tale to her. "Ligeia" also reworks the theme of vampirism, in a veiled fashion, much like Odoyevsky's "The Cosmorama": "...I have *never known* the paternal name of her who was my friend and my betrothed, and who became the partner of my studies, and finally the wife of my bosom....I was sufficiently aware of her infinite supremacy to resign myself, with a child-like confidence, to her guidance through the chaotic world of metaphysical investigation...Ligeia had brought me far more, very far more than ordinarily falls to the lot of mortals" (2:311-20). Generally speaking, "Ligeia" may have a Hoffmannian frame, but not necessarily a Hoffmannian content, and this presents the critic with problematic questions. All this can nevertheless be a result of the fact that Poe, much like Odoyevsky, is reworking the stricter concept of Hoffmannian *Märchen* into his own more eclectic, post-Romantic definition of the short story, and the critic may thus be befuddled by literary-historical change into seeing things which were not really there to begin with, namely, an intentional high Romanticism in "Ligeia." Perhaps Poe, in "Ligeia," works his way to a post-Romantic attitude by having the narrator circumlocute, in rather arabesque language, the void that is at the center of the story, namely, the ontological impossibility of high Romanticism. The story would have more clearly reached a post-Romantic paradigm had Poe written the dénouement as he suggested to Cooke, leaving Ligeia unsuccessful, entombed as Rowena. From a purely literal standpoint, the dénouement is not successful proof of the tale's tendency toward the idea of a Biedermeier. It may be an optimistic ending because Ligeia returns from the dead. It may be a pessimistic ending because the return of one person required the death of another, Rowena. It may be optimistic only in so far as the narrator, from the effects of taking opium, fantasizes the return of Ligeia. This fantasizing, much like Vladimir's in "The Cosmorama," could of course be veiling something more sinister,

namely, double murder. "Ligeia" therefore goes beyond a strictly high Romantic vision, but does it ever really arrive at a Biedermeier?

If there is proof, to use Ali Behdad's term, of a *belated* questioning of the assumptions behind high Romanticism in "Ligeia," it resides in the tale's tendency, at irregular points, to undercut its own thematics. Basically, this undercutting occurs in two ways. Either the narrator exposes his own unreliability as a narrator, or he speaks condescendingly of something, overinflating motifs until they appear awkward, or summarizing them into meaninglessness. Soon after purchasing the English abbey, the narrator becomes explicitly unreliable: "I had become a bounden slave in the trammels of opium, and my labors and my orders had taken a coloring from my dreams. But these absurdities I must not pause to detail" (2:320). Once the real phantasmagoria has begun, and moments before Rowena swallows what Mabbott terms the *elixir vitae*, the narrator again shows us his state: "But I was wild with the excitement of an immoderate dose of opium, and heeded these things [my supernatural visions] but little, nor spoke of them to Rowena" (2:325). The set-up of the bridal chamber is evidence of the second tendency, toward an over-inflation of motifs until they collapse. This chamber seems ready for a magic ritual, and indeed, it could be a conscious part of the narrator's plan to reanimate Ligeia, in the body of a victim, Rowena, but the sentence which caps the description is reminiscent of Doctor Bin's wake-up calls to Vladimir, which terminate the latter's bizarre visions because they are so out of place. Here, we read:

> The room lay in a high turret of the castellated abbey, was pentagonal in shape, and of capacious size. Occupying the whole southern face of the pentagon was the sole window—an immense sheet of unbroken glass from Venice—a single pane, and tinted of a leaden hue, so that the rays of either the sun or moon, passing through it, fell with a ghastly lustre on the objects within....The ceiling, of gloomy-looking oak, was excessively lofty, vaulted, and elaborately fretted with the wildest and most grotesque specimens of a semi-Gothic, semi-Druidical device. From out the most central recess of this melancholy vaulting, depended, by a single chain of gold with long links, a huge censer of the same metal, Saracenic in pattern, and with many perforations so contrived that there writhed in and out of them, as if endued with a serpent vitality, a continual succession of parti-colored fires....In each of the angles of the chamber stood on end a gigantic sarcophagus of black granite, from the tombs of the kings over against Luxor, with their aged lids of immemorial sculpture. But in the draping of the apartment lay, alas! the chief phantasy of all....*The phantasmagoric effect was vastly heightened by the artificial introduction of a strong continual current of wind behind the draperies—giving a hideous and uneasy animation to the whole.* [my italics] (2:321-2)

The artificially introduced wind is really too much for this scene, and may be read as parodic embellishment, pushing what can be read up to that point as a mimetic description, however bizarre, into the realm of a surreal and flimsy dreamworld, the same realm into which Bin's gruff comments push Vladimir's cosmoramic visions. A similar tendency is seen once Ligeia attempts reanimating herself within the body of Rowena. Here, rather than overinflating the scenery, the narrator tends to summarize it into meaninglessness, into what Griffith calls the "deadest of Romanticisms" (Griffith 16). Ligeia attempts reanimation four times, and is apparently successful that fourth time which Cooke considered too drastic to be believable. In the first attempt, there is "a sob, low, gentle, but very distinct,...[coming] from the bed of ebony—the bed of death" (*Poe* 2:326). In the second attempt, there is "a slight, a very feeble, and barely noticeable tinge of color...[flushing] up within the cheeks,..." (2:327). In the third attempt, there is "some vague sound issuing from the region of the bed....it was a sigh" (2:327). In the fourth attempt, there is again a stirring, "and now more vigorous than hitherto,..." (2:329). It is between the third and fourth tries that the narrator asks, rather comically: "But why shall I minutely detail the unspeakable horrors of that night? Why shall I pause to relate how, time after time, until near the period of the gray dawn, this hideous drama of revivification was repeated;...? *Let me hurry to a conclusion* [my italics]" (2:328-9).

I began with the intention that these discussions, these suggestive *aperçus* dreaded by Schapiro, point out a difference between Hoffmann's primarily high Romantic vision and Poe's and particularly Odoyevsky's late and/or post-Romantic one. Poe's oeuvre is closer to Odoyevsky's but is more difficult to situate. It is also more difficult to situate than Hoffmann's. Poe's work, when called on to be representative, tends to make an argument backfire, or more gently, gives the argument a tentative flavor. But this also makes the argument more honest because situating Poe is a struggle, and Hoffmann and Odoyevsky have nonetheless aided both endeavors, of struggling and situating. Nemoianu suggests that Hoffmann is the transitional figure (43, 31). I suggest that Poe's oeuvre is the more transitional of the two, but I will do no more than suggest this because Odoyevsky may be even more obviously transitional, being sandwiched

between figures like Pushkin and Dostoyevsky and pointing in both directions. And most importantly, the characteristic of being transitional seems double-edged. Poe and Odoyevsky may be literally transitional, standing half-way between Romanticism and the Biedermeier, which may be close to Nemoianu's conception of the term transitional. They can also be metaphorically transitional, whereby they no longer stand between movements but are clearly situated within, and metaphoric of, the Biedermeierzeit as an obvious, that is to say, self-conscious experiment in *transitional poetics*. This last possibility comes closer to what I have been saying. The Odoyevsky and Poe oeuvres seem to frame ideological hesitancy. "The Improvvisatore" and "The Oval Portrait," among other tales, come to mind. Hoffmann is different, rather confidently illustrating paradigms. Ritter Gluck and the painter George Haberland from "The Doubles" come to mind, but so does Von Zelies' daughter Natalie, who retires to a nunnery. Rowena goes through a similar passage when entering the decaying English abbey that the narrator of "Ligeia" has purchased. The contexts are different, though, in keeping with the varieties of Romanticism, and in keeping with the varieties of approaching the topic of Romanticism. Lockridge suggested, tying Shelley to first-generation Romantics, that memory plays a weak role here because there is in the present "a struggle to overcome hatred" and a tendency toward the unrealized future, as in *Prometheus Unbound*, which counters Wordsworth's "tragic naturalism" where memory is strong (283-4). Memory certainly plays a part in the late Romantic ethos of Poe's "Ligeia," where the narrator, lamenting Ligeia's death, speaks through flashes of recollection (*Poe* 2:311). Memory is also present in "The Cosmorama," but Odoyevsky pushes it toward amnesia and forgetfulness, as when Vladimir's aunt remembers the French Revolution as a time "when coffee and sugar went up..." (*The Salamander and Other Gothic Tales* 102). Sophia suggests, innocently, that this revolution must have been the product of a fable her German guardian loved, "The Dragon-Fly and the Ant": "I could never see what was so good about it....I used to say to everyone, couldn't we ask the author to change that fable, but they all laughed at me" (101).

IX - Neoclassicism(s)

In *Biedermeier Painting 1815-1848*, Geraldine Norman gives the following statement:

> The high finish which is characteristic of most Biedermeier painting has its roots in French classicism and the school of David. Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg, the most influential teacher of the Copenhagen school, studied with David in Paris, as did Johann Peter Krafft, the father of Viennese genre painting, while Karl Begas, Berlin's leading portraitist of the Biedermeier period, studied with David's pupil, the Baron Gros. It is a reflection of the continuing influence of classical idealism that most Biedermeier paintings prettify, or at least tidy up, their subjects. (18)

Nemoianu similarly suggests that there is a more classicizing feel to the Biedermeier than to high Romanticism, but tensions begin to emerge in his statement:

> The idyllism of Cowper and Goldsmith found renewed echoes and equivalents. The vogue of neoclassicism was renewed by authors as different as Platen, Landor, Nodier, and Keats....The harsher intensities of romanticism were moderated by nostalgia for the Enlightenment. Much as the romantics liked to define themselves as opponents of eighteenth-century neoclassicism and the Enlightenment, they were somehow—I would almost say secretly—trying to fulfill its progressive program in one bold stroke. Progress was to be achieved by an impetuous raid, not by cautious tactical moves. The later romantics preserved the objective but changed the tactics, reverting to the more cautious approaches of their preromantic grandparents. (34)

There is apparently more nostalgia for Neoclassicism and the Enlightenment in the Biedermeier, and yet, the Romantics were also "secretly" attempting the same program. In what way, then, were the Biedermeier writers (in this case, Poe and Odoyevsky) closer to their pre-Romantic grandparents, if the high Romantics were already close enough? I ask this question for several reasons which will gradually become obvious. Werner P. Friedrich mentions that "epigones like Platen and Grillparzer preferred the Classicism of Italy and Greece to the formlessness that had been Romanticism" (259). The implication here is that high Romanticism is somehow formless, which is fine, but larger questions remain. John Buxton, in *The Grecian Taste*, a book from which he excludes Alexander Pope, writes: "Mengs' portrait of Winckelmann at the entrance to the exhibition, 'The Age of Neo-Classicism,' in Burlington House in 1972 proclaimed to every visitor the responsibility of this one man of genius for the Grecian taste which prevailed in Western Europe from 1760 to 1820, during the years which, for Goethe, formed the century of Winckelmann" (1). The dates are interesting for they basically include Nemoianu's high Romanticism, which now

falls within the "century of Winckelmann." And we should not forget Friedrich Schlegel's call for a Romantic "ideal" that was later expanded to include the creation of a new "mythology" which would "reflect the spiritual tendencies of the times," so that Classical Greek art still remains prototypical for Schlegel, but rather than merely being surpassed in its "very classicism," it now becomes a prospect for a "limitless growth of classicism," as stipulated in his 116th *Athenäum Fragment* (qtd. in Hanak 43).

Somehow, then, the Grecian taste and Romanticism per se are connected, and to say that the Biedermeier looks back to the neoclassical period excludes the possibility that high Romanticism also continues classicism/neoclassicism, perhaps of a different kind. Janson's *History of Art* suggests that "the two seem so interdependent that we should prefer a single name for both,...if we could find a suitable one. ('Romantic Classicism' has not won wide acceptance)" (630). Werner P. Friedrich suggests in his study that Lessing's wish to amalgamate "Shakespeare's gigantic characters" with classical ideas in his *Emilia Galotti* (1772) is made possible by "the somewhat freer Greek (rather than French) conception of Classicism of Sophocles" (204). This in part explains why the "Classicism of Goethe and Schiller...was permeated with a good deal of pre-romantic warmth" (189). Even Schiller's "'classical' dramas...represent a fascinating blending of Greek and Shakespearian ideals, a kind of union of both Classicism and Romanticism which made Schiller's plays quite acceptable to the romanticists who propagated his fame" (283-4). Even Schiller's most classical of plays, *Die Braut von Messina* (1803), fuses Grecian Classicism and Romanticism. The "potential brother-sister incest is Schiller's substitute for the actual mother-son incest of Oedipus,...the two messengers,...parallel the two shepherds who deliver crucial information in the ancient play. [and] The Greek chorus is imitated, in part, from the same classical source,..." (Passage, *Friedrich Schiller* 170). However, its "modern features were no less obvious to Schiller's contemporaries than its Greek characteristics, for a view similar to Herder's idea of fate underlies the presentation of the tragic complications:...The decisive factor in the action of *Die Braut von Messina* is not an inscrutable supernatural power, but the behaviour of the principal characters,...In *Oedipus Rex* the tragedy is not caused by the operation of an hereditary curse, nor is the secret inten-

tionally devised by any of the characters,..." (Stahl 128-30). Friedrich suggests that this union occurs "in spite of [the foundation] being rooted in Winckelmann and Lessing" (189). Rather, I will say, it occurs because of it. Friedrich goes on to say that Winckelmann's humanizing interpretation of Classical Greek art, as representing "edle Einfalt und stille Grösse [noble simplicity and quiet grandeur]," influenced Lessing's, Goethe's, and Schiller's conception "of the Greeks as essentially restrained, sublimated, Apollonian characters" (189). Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (*History of the Art of Antiquity*, 1764) had Lessing as one of its first readers, and the latter was fully aware of Winckelmann's position regarding "the role of beauty in the plastic arts two years before the Easter of 1766, when the *Laokoön* was published" (Rudowski 72).

The "formlessness" of high Romanticism, as Friedrich terms it, seems to be a case of mistaken identities, a substitution of Symbolism for Romanticism. Wylie Sypher elaborates:

> Baudelaire at least had at his disposal "little poems in prose" to express "the undulations of the dream." Wordsworth wanted to change poetic language but accepted a "regular and uniform metre" because, he said cautiously, "there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds." In short, like other romantics he had a limited confidence in any new medium;...The uncertainty and incompleteness of romantic experiments in technique are also evident in Shelley, whose intensely emotive art should, logically, have led him to the wild music of Rimbaud's illuminations. Instead, Shelley revolutionizes his technique in relatively few passages. *Prometheus Unbound* is an ascent to the incandescent heights of romantic freedom by the somewhat devious approach through "Lyrical Drama."...What is true of Shelley is also true of Byron, whose insurgent, mercurial temperament was able to treat with virtuosity the Spenserian stanza and *ottava rima*. By one of the most egregious romantic feats Byron's satanic melancholy,...becomes articulate in Spenserian *stanzas*...It is a daring anachronism,.... (*Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature* 68-9)

Sypher is implying that Romanticism has its limits, that it is regulated by rules, however romantic it be. The formlessness of Romanticism is in fact a belated, contrived idea, owing, as Sypher suggests, to Baudelaire's substitution of style for form: "Baudelaire is rejecting the earlier romantic surrender to feeling so that he may be more entirely aware how feeling becomes art,...Baudelaire was attracted to Gautier and Poe, who cultivated a style 'pur et fleuri,' cold, calm, like diamond" (71). Sypher devotes a paragraph to Poe, interestingly enough, not in his section on the picturesque and Romanticism but in a section called "Neo-Mannerism." He says:

> A sense of style and the artificial must have been what attracted Baudelaire to Poe, who defines poetry as "the rhythmical creation of Beauty" and abstracts the emotions to a *motif*....It [poetry for Poe] is abstract music, of pure contour. No more preposterous critical document has ever appeared than Poe's "Philosophy of Composition," arguing that the writing of a

> poem should proceed "step by step to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem." The Italian mannerists had this notion of Beauty as an Idea or Design in the mind....Poe's insulated designs are related, through Baudelaire, to the art of symbolists and decadents, whose music is another stylization in a century without style. (168)

Sypher's suggestion that Poe's ideas are related to those of the Mannerists raises intriguing possibilities in interpretation. It raises the possibility that any statement which implies a return to neoclassical ideas on the part of the Biedermeier, will also be contaminated, inevitably, with issues of pseudo-classicism, whether such contamination is made obvious or not. Put simply, we may be dealing with a multiplicity of neoclassicisms, and hence, the Biedermeier (i.e. Poe and Odoyevsky) may or may not be looking back at a different neoclassical milieu than the Grecian one which Romanticism proper continues, according to Friedrich Schlegel, among others (Hanak 43).

It is probable enough that certain neoclassical elements make their way into the Biedermeier but a closer comparative look at tales by Poe and Odoyevsky is required. My purpose here is to elaborate further on the Poe and Odoyevsky oeuvres, as representative of a Biedermeierzeit, and in relation to classicistic features, and not to elaborate on the eighteenth century in and of itself. Nonetheless, Clifton Cherpack raises important points in his article, "The Literary Periodization of Eighteenth-Century France," that contradictions in criticism abound in relation to the literature of this "long" period, and that further study is required (326). I have already spoken of how Buxton's suggestion of a Grecian taste spanning up to 1820 contradicts Friedrich's opinion that high Romanticism is formless, less classicistic than later Romanticism, an opinion which is later found in Nemoianu's study as well. The first half of the eighteenth century, prior to the watershed 1760s when Winckelmann published his *Geschichte* and Lessing his *Laokoön*, influencing the shift towards Grecian taste, is equally intriguing. This is the period in which the excavations of Herculaneum and Pompeii were begun, in 1719/1738 and 1748, respectively (Hibbert 159). Hibbert suggests that "the uncovering of Pompeii and Herculaneum might be accounted the second wave of the Renaissance so profound were its effect upon taste" (159). These discoveries came soon after Palladio's works had made an impression on public taste, largely through the endeavors of the Earl of Burlington, "who travelled in Italy in 1710-1713, and who had enthusiastically measured every structure known to have been created by Andrea Palladio, and who in 1715

brought out a translation of Palladio's *Quattro Libri dell' Architettura* (1570)" (Kirby 65-6). Soon after this, in 1720, "when it was seen that Englishmen were very eager to improve their taste, that was bad," Jonathan Richardson published the well-known *Account of some of the Statues, Bas-Reliefs, Drawings and Pictures in Italy*, a work which came out in a near void and was in such demand that a second printing was made two years later (67-8). At the same time that Richardson was making sketches for his book while in Italy (a tour which was completed in only six weeks), a certain Edward Wright Esq. was taking his time, travelling in the region for two years, until 1722, and publishing in 1730 his *Observations made Travelling Through France, Italy &c.*, a work in which he talks of pictures, sculpture, and provides discussions on pavements of Roman roads, basilisks, and views of certain cities (68). Apart from influencing the taste of this half-century, these publications also got the Grand Tour under way, but a Grand Tour with a more Roman than Grecian emphasis. It was not until 1749 that the possibility of visiting Greece became more attractive, when Lord Charlemont, a member of the Dilettanti Society and one of the first people to distinguish between Greek and Roman art, travelled to Greece with a draughtsman (102). In 1751, the Society of Dilettanti "sent out to Athens two young architects, James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, to make detailed drawings of the antiquities found there; they remained in Greece for nearly four years, and the first volume of their monumental *Antiquities of Athens* was published in 1762,..." (Buxton 6). It was in 1764 that Sir William Hamilton went out to Naples as British envoy, remaining there until 1800, and using "the opportunity provided to form two superb collections of Greek vases. The first of these was bought by the British Museum in 1772, to form the nucleus of the Greek collection there" (11). Hamilton gave credit to Winckelmann and d'Hancarville "for proving that the vases were Greek, and not, as had previously been supposed, Etruscan" (11). D'Hancarville's four-volume folio, *Collection of Etruscan, Greek and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honourable William Hamilton* (1766-7), along with Winckelmann's *Geschichte* and the Abbé de Saint-Non's *Voyage pittoresque ou description des royaumes de Naples et de Sicile* (1781-6), became a standard source work of the neoclassical period (De Seta 16-7). Cherpack is concerned with the attitude of such work as that of Helmut Hatzfeld, which takes the dominant style of the previous half-cen-

tury, the Rococo, and applies it to the entire century, suggesting that the term somehow harmonizes "Enlightenment and *sensibilité*" (qtd. in Cherpack 324). Focusing on Roger Laufer's *Style rococo, style des "Lumières,"* Cherpack outlines the chronological periodization operating here: "First, from 1685 to 1715, we have a period of pseudoclassicism which, with a few exceptions, seems to him [Laufer] to be 'un désolant spectacle'...Then, from 1715 to 1748, there is presumably a coexistence of 'le maniérisme' [Marivaux] and 'l'académisme' [Voltaire] along with some examples of the Regency rococo like the *Lettres persanes*, *Manon Lescaut*, and the *Lettres philosophiques*...The great rococo period runs from 1748 to 1774...[and so on]" (325).

Much like the idea of a formless high Romanticism clouds the relationship of such Romanticism with the Greek-inspired neoclassicism of the second half of the eighteenth century, the idea of an all-pervading Rococo clouds the contours of the earlier neoclassicism of that century, in which, Laufer suggests, Mannerism, Academicism, and the Rococo seem to coexist. This phase of neoclassicism appears rather porous, comprehensive, and accommodating for even contradictory tendencies, raising the following question: Is the Biedermeier in a diagonal relationship with this earlier neoclassicism, whereby its classicistic tendencies are different than those implicit in a high Romantic paradigm? Geraldine Norman's suggestion that Biedermeier painting has its roots in the school of David is countered by Wilhelm Mrazek, who says that "between 1835-40 and 1848-57, the plain and simple decorative elements [in the functional arts] had become transformed into the playful forms of the Rococo....[and this] reversion to a period which, like the Biedermeier, had expressed a preference for the intimate sphere of domesticity, was accorded the stylistic designation of the Second Rococo" (19). Franz Windisch-Graetz supplements Mrazek's comments: "The most famous example of furnishings in the 'Second Rococo,' as the style is called in Vienna, is provided by the entertainment rooms in the Palais Liechtenstein in Vienna, which was refurnished in all its splendour from 1836-8 to 1848. The extravagantly carved furniture, the wood panelling and expensive parquets are the work of Carl Leistler (Vienna, 1805- Kalksburg, 1857), whose name more than any other is representative of Viennese furniture of the period on account of this commission" (49). Georg Himmelheber writes that as the Biedermeier wore on artists "began to orient

themselves to the cityscapes of the Rococo, in which cities were depicted as built works of art. Great expanses of sky engendered a sense of space; cloud formations and sunlight created a dramatic scenery of their own. It was as though the gauzy veils of Rococo skies had descended over nineteenth-century cities" (33). Patrick Brady suggests that "all first-person narration is narcissistic and that first-person (fictional) narration is specifically characteristic of the rococo....not felt in the preceding Baroque and Classical movements...[and] When the ego later comes back into its own, with the rise of the bourgeoisie and the advent of romanticism, first-person narration dwindles almost to the point of disappearance—no doubt because such subordinate outlets [of emotion] are no longer necessary" (217-8). Poe is well known for his first-person narratives, and perhaps this indicates a relationship between the Biedermeier and the first half of the eighteenth century, when direct expression of the ego was also "inhibited by social pressures derived from the value-system of the aristocracy" (218). Perhaps Poe's case is special because of the belatedness of aesthetic change in the United States and his own tastes that are not exactly a part of the mainstream:

> The neoclassical style was not,...rapidly adopted in Colonial America....Powel, a young man with political aspirations,...found it prudent to accommodate himself (literally) to local preferences. His repudiation of the classical taste to which he had been exposed in England and on the Grand Tour reflects the colonial mentality he encountered in America on the eve of the Revolution....By the 1760s it seemed to an increasing number of Americans that England had gone astray; America was now the defender of traditional British values and virtues. And this political conservatism in America manifested itself in aesthetic conservatism....Only after American independence was achieved did the powerful symbolic potential of classical antiquity become valid and classicism pervade every aspect of life in the American Republic. For Samuel Powel in Philadelphia in the late 1760s and early 1770s, rococo discretion was the better part of neoclassical valor,.... (Prown 90-7)

Regarding Biedermeier literature, I therefore ask the following, raising concerns in labelling and periodization similar to those of Cherpack: Are the classicistic tendencies displayed here perhaps more evocative of Alexander Pope's oeuvre than of Schiller's Greek-inspired one, an oeuvre which is ill-defined, designated sometimes as Rococo, sometimes as Augustan? Hatzfeld is decided on the subject: "Alexander Pope (1688-1744) has the greatest Rococo affinity with Voltaire, who called him 'the most elegant, the most correct poet. He can be translated because he is extremely clear'" (Hatzfeld 149). Sypher is in agreement with this, it appears, suggesting that the

"Franco-Roman-Augustan tradition" usually called "neoclassicism" is "implicit in baroque itself," producing Hardouin-Mansart's Church of the Invalides and Dryden's heroic plays, "an art essentially different from the slighter decorative rococo art of Pineau, Alexander Pope, Watteau, Lancret, Guardi, Longhi, and Tiepolo" (*Four Stages of Renaissance Style* 253). Sypher maintains this view in his later work, saying that "Pope's language is not the language of Dryden or Racine, and his verse does not show a late-baroque mode of consciousness, which is more robust in Dryden and psychologically more inward in Racine's analysis of the self. Pope belongs to another tradition in art-forms, the rococo....One of the improprieties of criticism has been to set Pope with Dr. Johnson among neo-classical poets" (*Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature* 7-8). Sypher's idea of neoclassicism appears only to include what is often known as seventeenth-century French classicism, which he also calls, somewhat imprecisely, the Franco-Roman-Augustan tradition. And why speak of this first phase of neoclassicism in such terms if it is already, as Sypher says, contradicting himself, not really a first phase but "implicit in baroque itself"? Perhaps Hatzfeld and Sypher are the victims of Pope's mixing of satirical forms (Juvenalian and Horatian), labelling Pope's compositions as Rococo on the basis of this variety (Weinbrot, *Alexander Pope and the Traditions of Formal Verse Satire* 276-330). Brady cautions that "the satiric is in itself foreign to the rococo aesthetic," and that Pope, much like Hogarth, is therefore in a paradoxical relationship with the Rococo (Brady 76). Buxton does well to point out the imprecisions which arise when using such terminology, and he says that while "'Grecian' invites our attention to the Greek world,...'neo-classical' leaves us adrift in the Ionian Sea, between Italy and Greece" (Buxton 2-3). Buxton suggests that a fruitful division be drawn between "Augustan" and "Grecian" tastes, and he counters the tendency to read Pope as Rococo, a tendency brought about through ill-use of the term neoclassicism, by stating: "The literary taste which coincides with Palladianism is that of the Augustans, who looked to Virgil and Ovid, to Horace, Persius and Juvenal, as Palladio had looked to Vitruvius....their preferred form was satire, the one kind which the Romans claimed that they had not derived from Greece but had invented for themselves" (4).

William Park, in his *The Idea of Rococo*, tackles the supposed contradictions between

Rococo and Palladianism by saying that "both had established themselves by the 1730s;...And both were rejected by the neoclassical artists who came into prominence in the 1760s....Nowhere is this transformation more striking than at Kedleston (1761), where Lord Scarsdale dismissed the 'late' neo-Palladian architect Paine to hire the even more neoclassical Adam" (59-60). Park says that we can usually find Palladianism and the Rococo in close proximity: "There is no way that a reading of a neo-Palladian facade, whether at Chiswick, Houghton (1722), or Holkham, can indicate the [Rococo] richness and profusion one becomes accustomed to find within" (65). We can also see the two styles "juxtaposed as exterior [facade] and garden....Twentieth-century scholars have been somewhat uneasy about this juxtaposition of 'romantic,' informal, or rococo garden and 'classical,' formal, or neo-Palladian house, and have been at some pains to explain their genealogy from common sources" (67). Pevsner suggests that the unusual juxtaposition derives "from Whiggism and rationalism" (qtd. in Park 67). Wittkower suggests that "garden and building [are] 'two sides of the same medal' inscribed Liberty" (qtd. in Park 67). Park speaks of Alexander Pope's role in this milieu as follows:

> Pope is a Palladian not only because of his association with the circle of Lord Burlington but more so because his poetry is "Augustan." Just as Augustan signifies a poetry based on Roman models, a poetry that is moral, urbane, civilized, and critical, so neo-Palladian is also based on Roman models...Yet,...Pope was an originator of the rococo *jardin anglaise*. Who else literally constructed his own *rocaille* chamber, the famous grotto, where like an inhabitant of one of Meissonier's prints, the poet enjoyed the play of diffused light and listened to the soft sounds of falling waters?...And just as Pope's poetry may be characterized as Augustan, so it has been called rococo; indeed, to some it represents the epitome of the style. The point then is not that sometimes Pope was neo-Palladian or Augustan and sometimes rococo, that his villa was in one style, his garden in another, or that this poem is Augustan and that rococo. Such a view is not only overtly categorical but absurd. No one had a more unified style or sensibility than Pope, no one a more consistent voice. The point is that the same artist may be seen, accurately, as *both* Augustan and rococo. The terms do not exclude but complement one another, as I should hope the case of Pope demonstrates. (69)

The constructive aspect of such an argument is that it allows one to read the first half of the eighteenth century as a legitimate mode of neoclassicism, different than the preceding neoclassicism which is "implicit in baroque" as Sypher suggests, but also different than the Greek-inspired neoclassicism which became influential in the 1760s, and included Winckelmann, Lessing, Hamilton's cabinet of antiquities in Naples, Goethe, and especially Schiller.

The second phase of neoclassicism, if we can call it that, is perhaps the most difficult of the

three modern phases after the Renaissance to interpret, and this makes it problematic to read the Biedermeier in relation to such a phase: (a) Baroque neoclassicism (b) Palladian neoclassicism (c) Grecian neoclassicism. The second phase is regarded as the Rococo interval, a transition between two forms of commonly accepted neoclassicisms, seventeenth-century classicism (the school of Poussin) and what we usually know as "Neoclassicism" (the school of David). Park's interpretation of Pope allows for a reading of this period as a type of neoclassicism that is not necessarily less classical than the preceding phase of classicism, owing to Rococo contamination, but perhaps more classical than the previous Baroque phase. Put simply, Rococo elements in this phase not only refine the previous Baroque extremes, but also refine the previous interpretation of classicism functioning under the Baroque, a Baroque interpretation in which it is difficult to distinguish between Grecian and Augustan influences, everything being rather Hellenistic. Friedrich suggests that in the Baroque there is a gradual shift "from Senecan horror to Sophoclean restraint," and that this distinguishes "Racine's real Classicism" from the pseudo-classicism functioning at the time (187). The problem with such an argument is that Racine's classicism is still functioning within a Baroque milieu, where both Senecan horror and Sophoclean restraint can coexist. Friedrich's over-categorization mimics the traditional difficulty in viewing Pope as both Rococo and Augustan, something which Park tries to correct. Friedrich himself admits, speaking briefly of the Rococo, that Pope represents "best the spirit of this *essentially neo-classical school*,...[my italics]" (162). Reading the coexistence of Palladianism and the Rococo as a phase of neoclassicism is significant in relation to Nemoianu's suggestion that the Biedermeier looks back to neoclassicism, because now, one can engage the question with a more specific view of the eighteenth century, not as a vaguely neoclassical period, but a period in which different tastes, Augustan (Pope) and Grecian (Schiller), compete, tastes which in turn allow for different milieux to emerge, Rococo and Romantic, respectively.

The other problem with this second phase of neoclassicism is that instead of being subsumed under the term Rococo, it is also placed as a mere appendage to seventeenth-century classicism. This occurs if the Rococo is thought of, not in autonomous terms as Patrick Brady thinks of

it, but in terms of belatedness, a last phase of the Baroque, as Janson's *History of Art* interprets it: "Rococo was a refinement in miniature of the curvilinear, 'elastic' Baroque of Borromini and Guarini, and thus could be happily united with Austrian and German Late Baroque architecture" (599). On the other hand, and rarely, the second wave of neoclassicism has been seen as a precursor of Romanticism through the transitional nature of the Rococo, as Richard M. Ilgner interprets the situation, drawing a division between the "Romantic Chivalrous Epic...with its Wielandian spirit" and "those few Rococo works...of Friedrich von Hagedorn (1708-1754), Johann Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715-1769), Johann Peter Uz (1720-1796), and others whose works were light lyrical offerings and fables" (8). He distinguishes between what he calls Wieland's "humanistic type of Rococo" and Hagedorn's Anacreontic school whose poets are different, looking back to "seventeenth-century elegiac hedonism" (14):

> ...the anacreontic poets really arrive at a rejection of reality and tend to withdraw into their poetic, or in some cases if they are fortunate enough to be economically independent as was S. Gessner (1730-1788), into real idylls. The difference between their type of Rococo, then, and Wieland's becomes quite clear when their respective Arcadian landscapes are compared. The anacreontic Arcadia simply approaches more and more the typical 'locus amoenus' common to all essentially pastoral poetry, a static vision, still-life word paintings representing the 'Ausweg in die Idylle.' Not so Wieland's Arcadia. It, too, reflects a world of the imagination but a flexible one, a dynamic vision, which points only forward [to romanticism]. (15)

Ilgner's argument multiplies contradictions, drawing divisions between Wieland's "humanistic," ethical version of the Rococo and earlier hedonistic versions which to him are less properly Rococo because they are not the precursors of Romanticism in his theoretical framework, where the growth of neoclassical humanism coincides with and requires the growth of Wieland's kind of Rococo, both falling into the second half of the eighteenth century in Germany. Perhaps because Ilgner's argument focuses on the origins of Romanticism, via the chivalrous epic as a precursor to the Romantic novel, he does not seem as concerned with the nuances operating in the pre-1760s period, and thus draws black-and-white distinctions. This is both fortunate and unfortunate. By reading the Rococo as pre-Romantic, Ilgner at least does not read it as part of a Baroque continuum, but then again, he completely avoids the issue of an ill-defined, second wave of neoclassicism, where the kind of Rococo displayed by the Anacreontic school would be quite nicely situated, but Wieland's version would not, coming closer to Goethe's and Schiller's Grecian taste,

and hence, to Romanticism.

It is the tendency to link the second wave of neoclassicism with the first Baroque wave which poses greater problems for interpretation than Ilgner's linking of terms like Rococo and Romantic. This more frequent tendency is extended to literature when Pope is placed in the same group as Dryden, because, among other things, Boileau is said to play a profound influence on both. However, while Boileau's *Le Lutrin* influenced Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1714), and while Pope in his *An Essay on Criticism* (1711) is indebted to Boileau, it should be noted that "Pope's accent was slightly different and that he was writing down precepts essentially for critics, while Boileau had tended to guide poets" (Friedrich 174). It also seems that Dryden better understood Boileau: "Dryden puts his finger on the strong points in Boileau in a manner that has never been much improved on since..." (Clark 6). Regarding Pope, there is the question of whether he new French well enough. The editor of Spence's *Anecdotes* thinks there is no doubt that "he understood French sufficiently to read it and relish their poetry" but he adds that Voltaire, a fairly good witness, said: "Pope, whom I was intimately acquainted with, could hardly read French, and spoke not one syllable of our language, not being capable of doing it" (qtd. in Clark 32). Few English readers went so far as to prefer *Le Lutrin* to *The Rape of the Lock* but Dennis took this extra step in his *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* (1728), "which is a quaint example of a stage in the development of comparative criticism only slightly more advanced than that of Rymer's parallel between Boileau and Rochester" (Clark 10). In the case of Boileau's *Satire I*, he "is not composing an 'imitation' in the manner of Pope or Johnson, in which the poet gives a classically trained audience the pleasure of seeing a favourite Latin poem in modern dress. His classicism seems, rather, to consist in the assumption that the procedures by which Juvenal lashed vice in ancient Rome can be applied by a modern poet to Paris" (Pocock 23). In *L'Art Poétique*, "Boileau sees that it is futile, and a denial of the purpose of the doctrine [of neoclassicism as universally valid], to indulge in antiquarian dreams about a golden age or revivals of Greek Tragedy. He sees that neo-classical principles must be demonstrated to work in the here and now, in French society of the seventeenth century. He sees that literary neo-classicism is part of an ideological structure, linked functionally with the

social structure and its religion" (143-4).

Howard Erskine-Hill draws a line between Dryden's and Pope's oeuvres, thereby linking Dryden more closely with seventeenth-century classicism (which includes Racine, Boileau and the Restoration in England), and in the process, he firmly places Pope in the second wave of neoclassicism, of the half-century prior to the 1760s. This endeavor once again legitimizes Pope's wave of neoclassicism as equally autonomous and unique as the other two, better-known phases. Erskine-Hill speaks of "Augustan" and "Antonian" tastes, of how Antony "could be a hero of love to the Restoration,...and in the Restoration...the stress on Antony and Augustus as mighty opposites was commonplace....The Antonian celebration of the hedonistic monarch comes, as we might expect, from the pen of Rochester in one of his more libertine moments: in the Sceptre Lampoon (*c.* 1674) which mockingly and shockingly praises the sexually infatuated Charles by contrast with the politically and militarily ambitious Louis XIV,..." (224-5). Erskine-Hill suggests that Dryden continues "exploring the Antonian monarch: the opposite term,...to the Augustan monarch" (226). Regarding the question whether Dryden was Augustan or not, he says that "Dryden expressed what he meant by Augustan achievement in the Vitruvian metaphor of 'To Congreve' and saw himself a precursor rather than at the meridian of 'the promis'd hour'" (231). Therefore, rather than calling Pope "the English Boileau" (Clark 31), perhaps we can call Dryden this and think of Pope as the English Gottsched: "Gottsched's dictatorship over German literature [in the 1730s and 40s] was as absolute and stultifying as Pope's dictatorship over English literature [at the same time];...[and] Lessing,...in his famous seventeenth *Letter on Literature* attacked Gottsched...in the name of a freer, a Greek conception of Classicism" (Friedrich 175). Gottsched's *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst vor die Deutschen* (1729) "derives from the philosophy of the Enlightenment...[and since accepting] only reason as a criterion could not ultimately deal with poetry that incorporated the irrational,..." (Mitchell 27). The importance of Pope's poetic method "can be seen by placing him in the enlightenment that finally produced Immanuel K[illegible]t, who said that human experience is possible only when we have an 'idea of an order,'..." (Sypher, *Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature* 10-1). Pope praises the Roman satirists, as does Gottsched: "In the first volume [of the *Critische*

Dichtkunst], Gottsched stated that, instead of an introduction, he was furnishing a new translation of Horace's *Ars poetica*" (Mitchell 28). Gottsched's taste, much like Pope's, is Augustan, and he prefers to cite "Homer not in Greek but in Latin translation, notably in Horace's interpretation" (34). Both of them belong to the ill-defined second wave of neoclassicism, which, as Laufer suggested, allows for Mannerism, Academicism, and the Rococo to coexist, and as Park suggested, allows for Palladianism and the Rococo to coexist in England. It was in Germany that "the English *Spectators*, *Ramblers*, *Tatlers*, and *Observers* were most frequently imitated,...Outstanding among them were *Die vernünftigen Tadlerinnen* (*The Reasonable Female Critics*, 1725) and *Der Biedermann* (*The Honest Man*, 1727) by Gottsched..." (Friedrich 213-4).

Nemoianu's suggestion, that the Biedermeier is friendlier towards neoclassicism than high Romanticism was, and Friedrich's designation of high Romanticism as formless, tend to cloud the literary-historical nuances operating across this broad period of time leading up to Poe's and Odoyevsky's milieu. As Buxton says, there seem to be two neoclassical tastes, Augustan and Grecian, and this complicates Nemoianu's somewhat general statement that there is a classicization of literature occurring in the Biedermeier, thematically and otherwise. One classicization implies a return to the school of David, as Norman calls it, the other classicization is not thought of in such terms but as a "Second Rococo," as Mrazek says. Park attempts correcting this latter tendency by saying that the Rococo and neo-Palladianism complement each other, and happily allowing for the possibility of reading this ill-defined period as a legitimate neoclassicism in its own right. These problematic issues were already raised, implicitly, when Poe and Odoyevsky were read in relation to Hoffmann. Some readers will remember my hesitancy in describing the origins of ratiocinative fiction, via Poe's detective trilogy, as Biedermeier. There is a properly Romantic foundation behind the detective, Dupin, as an all-seeing and controlling figure, irrespective of the fact that there are certain post-Romantic elements in the plot. These problematic issues were already raised, even more implicitly, when I juxtaposed "The Purloined Letter" against Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* and read both in the light of what Lacan says about Poe's tale. Grecian neoclassicism, as a basis for the high Romantic program, according to Friedrich Schlegel, is

also the basis for Poe's ratiocinative work which is closer to a Romantic than a Biedermeier paradigm. Friedrich's spontaneous remark about the formlessness of Romanticism, however odd it may seem, exposes a link between such neoclassicism and romantic ideas. Grecian neoclassicism may be equally as formless as high Romanticism, and is therefore conducive to the development of the latter. How is this possible, if its formlessness implies a detachment from historical change and thus a sterility in inspiration? Its formlessness is supplemented with psychological and figural potency, as exemplified by the cryptic/archetypal triads operating in Sophocles' drama, and grafted onto Poe's ratiocinative trilogy. Derrida is also aware of this formlessness, specifically, a mimetic formlessness, but he elaborates on it in different terms than Lacan, arguing that Lacan has attempted *framing* the formlessness.

This may all seem confusing for the moment, but we must remember that the 1760s were a watershed in terms of literary-historical development in Europe precisely because of this reemergence of Grecian classicism, a peculiarly ahistorical form of classicism (when compared with the younger, more mimetic and derivative Roman kind) that brings about the later, perpetual fantasies of Romanticism, which include revolution, utopia, the idea of new beginnings, and so on. It brings about Romanticism because of its psychological-figural potency. It may be difficult to accept such an idea of formless classicism, and equally so, Janson's *History of Art* cautions that the phrase "Romantic Classicism" has not been well received. Such classicism seems nonetheless more historically formless than its Augustan counterpart. The Roman-Augustan tradition has more structure precisely because it is more historically embedded (coming later) than the Grecian tradition, and therefore, it is also less potent in psychological-figural terms. I am even tempted to say that Augustan classicism, as a formal device, has as its basis this earlier potency of a formless classicism. This is interesting because it suggests that psychological or archetypal figures are located within certain formal structures and concepts such as classicism and neoclassicism, but it also suggests that there is a deeper contradiction, a lack of synchronization between certain elements within that concept of the classical per se. These contradictions, in turn, lend themselves to scrutiny in such a manner as I am attempting, multiplying the idea of the classical in order to expose

the historical layering operating behind such an idea, a layering which comes into play when the Biedermeier is read in such a diagonally comparative way as Nemoianu suggests. Things are difficult to situate precisely because of this historical layering that produces and is in turn coupled with the ideological contradictions inherent in the term classical. Classicism is considered what it is because of: (a) its tendency toward the ahistorical/permanent (b) its emphasis on rule, structure, decorum, etc. These two tendencies are in many ways contradictory, implying a difference in classicisms, where the Grecian kind only fulfills requirement (a) and the Roman kind fulfills only requirement (b), the Grecian kind being formless, classical only as a psychological-figural foundation, and the Roman kind being more formed, classical in terms of academic, structural, institutional ideas and values, but not in terms of figural perpetuity (since it is more embedded historically and thus subject to gradual revision). Thus, there seems to be almost a split between Augustan and Biedermeier tendencies on the one hand, which reconcile and hold things together, and Baroque and Grecian-Romantic ones on the other hand, where counter-revolution or revolution, literally and ideologically, are the topics of the day. Gadamer elaborates on the difficulties of the word "classical":

> ...it was not surprising that, with the rise of historical reflection in Germany which took as its standard the classicism of Winckelmann, an historical concept of a time or a period detached itself from what was regarded as classical in Winckelmann's sense and denoted a quite specific stylistic ideal and, in a historically descriptive way, also a time or period that fulfilled this ideal....It is an awareness of decline and distance that gives birth to the classical norm. It is not by accident that the concept of the classical and of classical style emerges in late periods....Those authors who are regarded as classical are,...always the representatives of particular literary genres. They were considered as the perfect fulfilment of the norm of that literary genre,...If we now examine these norms of literary genres historically, i.e. if we consider their history, then the classical is seen as the concept of a stylistic phase, of a climax that articulates the history of the genre in terms of before and after....As this kind of historical stylistic concept, the concept of the classical is capable of being extended to any 'development' to which an immanent telos gives unity....Although this is an understandable development, the historicalisation of the concept also involves its uprooting, and that is why historical consciousness, when it started to engage in self-criticism, reinstated the normative element in the concept of the classical and the historical uniqueness of its fulfillment....Thus there culminates in the classical a general character of historical being, preservation amid the ruins of time....The classical, however, as Hegel says, is 'that which signifies itself and hence also interprets itself.'...What we call 'classical' does not first require the overcoming of historical distance, for in its own constant communication it does overcome it [and preserves itself]. The classical,...is certainly 'timeless,' but this timelessness is a mode of historical being. (Gadamer 256-7)

Gadamer's comments raise intriguing questions which are directly related to comparative

readings of the Biedermeier period, in relation to its supposedly classicizing tendencies. Gadamer suggests that in Winckelmann's time the concept of the classical became detached from the latter's concept of the classical and became a normative term, a marker of quality which emerges in "late periods," as he says. And so, we now speak of a book, author, or groups of books and authors as being "a classic" or "classics." An "awareness of decline and distance," Gadamer says, builds up this normative aspect of the term classical, an aspect which in turn mediates literary genres to us in our contemporary period. When we take this normative aspect of the term classical and begin analyzing literature and literary genres historically, then classical is seen as "the concept of a stylistic phase," measuring growth, development, and decline within a genre or genres, in the way that literary history does. The problem here is that once the normative aspect of the term classical is fused with the stylistic-historical aspect, it is no longer possible to split the two aspects without raising questions and suspicions on the part of one's methodology, which is no longer a methodology once the attempt at splitting has begun. Gadamer says that the normative "concept [of classical] fuses with the stylistic one" particularly when the "climactic points in the history of genres come largely within the same brief period of time,...within the totality of the historical development of classical antiquity,..." (257). What is significant here, in relation to Poe and Odoyevsky and the idea of a classicizing Biedermeierzeit, is that, as Gadamer implies, it is Winckelmann's idea of classicism which became inflated into a normative concept, still retaining its specificity in stylistic-historical terms (Grecian taste) but also having that specificity incorporated into larger terms (that there is only one neoclassicism, etc.). Steven D. Martinson even suggests that in Gadamer's attempt "to account for the tradition or transmission ('Überlieferung') of 'the classical heritage' into the present, and given his belief in the 'truth' of the experience ['Erfahrung'] of art...there is,...a deeper-lying affinity between the twentieth-century philosopher and the work of Friedrich Schiller [who is influenced by Winckelmann's Grecian taste]" (285). Thus, to attempt splitting the normative from the stylistic in the term classical, multiplying the term as I have, interjecting the Rococo, and so on, risks destabilizing the very notion of neoclassicism, which, in order to be referred to as truly neoclassical, must be thought of in unifying, normative terms.

I take such risks however because it is entirely possible that the Biedermeier, rather than looking back to Grecian neoclassicism, which is also a look back at what has become normative through its continuation as high Romanticism, is looking back at the ill-defined Augustan neoclassicism which is not considered as neoclassical as neoclassicism per se because it has not become normative like the latter, rather, it has remained closer to a stylistic-historical concept. The Romantic program looked back not to this but to the "timelessness" of Grecian classicism for inspiration, via Friedrich Schlegel and others. Augustan neoclassicism, through its lack of normative stability, may be more easy to reintroduce as a historical style, and hence, it may crop up in the Biedermeier precisely because of the historical revivalism that became popular at the time: "...[as the Biedermeier progressed] the tendency was towards historical styles and these were applied according to the function which a piece of furniture had to serve. For the furnishing of the reception and drawing rooms, preference was given to a style inspired by the Rococo period whilst for the rooms of the master of the house, for the library and dining room, Gothic and Renaissance were frequently regarded as suitable models" (Windisch-Graetz 49). It is almost as if the Grecian neoclassicism which held sway up to that moment was itself being reframed as a stylistic-historical concept in a process through which we might read the Biedermeier as finally *dropping the normative aspect of the term classicism*. Poe, as Wylie Sypher has pointed out, came closer to "insulating" stylistic-historical concepts than the Romantics, displaying a tendency towards Mannerism, perhaps, or more likely, towards an Augustan neoclassicism that allows, as Laufer said, for Mannerist, Academicist, and Rococo tendencies to emerge. This may be the case with Odoyevsky, as well. Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" (1846), set, of all times, in the eighteenth century, the "Age of Neoclassicism," may be helpful in further pursuing the contradictions inherent in the term classicism, or more specifically, neoclassicism. Odoyevsky's "Opere del Cavaliere Giambattista Piranesi" (1832), incorporated into *Russian Nights* (1844), for reasons obvious from the title, looking at a figure who championed Roman-Augustan tastes in classicism and countered Winckelmann's Grecian inclinations, should also be helpful in resolving questions raised here.

The most admired artist of eighteenth-century Rome was Piranesi, who was the inveterate

enemy of Greek taste, and Winckelmann's great rival, and he believed in and illustrated the universal supremacy of classical Roman genius with engravings of wild, colossal ruins (Kirby 103). Piranesi's engravings *Le Antiquità Romane* appeared in Rome in 1748, the year of the Pompeii discovery, and were in such demand that they were issued again in 1756 (103). In 1750, the series *Carceri* was published (103). In 1758, a Frenchman by the name of J. D. Le Roy published his *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grece*, which infuriated Piranesi, who answered with his *Della Magnificenza ed Architettura de' Romani*, in which he stated that Greek art had too much ornament (103). In 1764, Pierre Mariette replied to Piranesi in a letter saying that Greek art was not ornate at all, so Piranesi retaliated in 1765 with the famous *Parere su l'Architettura* (103). Principally because of Winckelmann's death, Piranesi modified his assertions in 1769 in *Diverse Maniere*, and with that, the "Greece versus Rome" debate died down. By that time, however, the shift from Augustan to Grecian taste had been completed.

Piranesi returns again in Odoyevsky's tale in 1832, when an aging bibliophile, recounting his adventures as a young man to other young travellers, his relatives, cites the incident when, passing through the Piazza Nova, he met an "eccentric" in a Naples bookshop (*Russian Nights* 61). The traveller, suspecting that the eccentric is an architect, grabs a folio collection, *Opere del Cavaliere Giambattista Piranesi*, and approaches the person with an intent to converse (61). The eccentric sees the folio collection: "...he jumped aside in horror, waving his hands, and shouted, 'For heaven's sake, close it, close this useless, horrible book'" (62)! The traveller is curious as to why the eccentric acts this way, and pulls out his wallet to buy the folio: "'Money!' uttered my eccentric with that sonorous whisper of which I was recently reminded by the incomparable Karatygin in *The Life of a Gambler*. 'You have money!' he repeated trembling all over" (62). The two men have the following conversation:

> "I admit, this exclamation of the architect somewhat cooled my desire to become his friend; but my curiosity got the better of me. 'Are you in want of money?' I asked.
> "'I? I need it very badly!' uttered the architect. 'And I've been in need of it for a very long time,' he added, stressing each word."
> "'And how much do you need?' I asked with feeling. 'Perhaps I really can help you.'"
> "'To begin with, I need just a trifle—a real trifle: ten million gold coins.'"
> "'But why so much?' I asked in amazement."
> "'To build a vault connecting Etna with Vesuvius for the Arch of Triumph, the gate to a

park and a castle which I've projected,' he answered as if unconcerned."

"I could hardly keep from laughing. 'Why, then,' I asked, 'being a man of such colossal ideas, did you show such aversion for the work of an architect whose ideas somewhat resemble yours?'"

"'Resemble?' shouted the stranger. 'Yes, resemble! But why do you pester me with this damned book, when I myself am its author?'"

"'No, that's too much!' I answered. Saying this, I opened the *Historical Dictionary* which lay at hand, and showed him the page on which it was written: 'Giambattista Piranesi, the famous architect...died in 1778....'"

"'Nonsense! Lies!' cried my architect. 'Oh, I would be happy if it were true! But I live; to my own misfortune, I live—and this damned book doesn't let me die.'" (62-3)

The stranger reveals himself to the traveller as the "ill-fated Piranesi" and he complains of how his projects have not been realized: "...buildings which had been started [by others] reached their completion, my rivals attained immortality, while I was still wandering from court to court, from waiting room to waiting room, with my portfolio which uselessly was getting fuller by the hour with wonderful and unfeasible projects" (63). He complains further: "Even if I should find him [a benefactor], my projects will have become obsolete; the century has outstripped much that was in them—and I have no more strength left in me to renew them" (65)! The traveller, taking pity on the eccentric, gives him "one of the gold coins" of the required ten million, and Piranesi, or the character who thinks he is Piranesi, says: "...even that much will do: I'll add this money to the sum I'm collecting for the purchase of Mont Blanc to level it to the ground; otherwise it will obstruct the view of my pleasure castle" (65-6). And with that remark the stranger disappears, ending the tale (66).

It may initially appear that Odoyevsky's tale is intended as a mockery of Piranesi's grandiose and impractical engravings of Roman ruins. However, he is at the same time portrayed in a melancholy and nostalgic way, as when he speaks of how "the century has outstripped much" that was in the engravings. The frame-tale dialogue which follows the "Piranesi" story makes things more obvious, particularly when the practical Victor says, countering Faust, that there "is no money now for that kind of thing, simply because now they are using it for building railroads" (66). The more humanistic Faust argues: "It seems to me that in Piranesi human feeling cries about what it lost, what may have been the clue to all its external actions, what had made the adornment of life—about *the useless*..." (67). Victor responds: "I prefer usefulness with the smallest proportion

of poetry..." (67). Setting the frame-tale argument aside, the tale itself paints the figure of Piranesi in a primarily romantic light, where Piranesi is the champion of impossible designs, where he is both poet and architect. It is Winckelmann, through Schiller, who allows for a fusion of romantic warmth and Grecian taste. Piranesi, by countering Winckelmann, may stand closer to Roman largeness of design, with the accompanying rigidity. Winckelmann, in contrast, Friedrich says, interprets classical Greece in a humanistic way. There is nothing exactly humanistic about engravings of large Roman ruins, but then again, while humanism and Romanticism may coincide, they do not require each other. Engravings can be Romantic or pre-Romantic without Grecian humanism, as in Piranesi's case. Odoyevsky's tale takes a bizarre position on the subject, perhaps made possible by the historical revivalism popular in the Biedermeier. Not concerning itself with the thematics of Piranesi's engravings, the tale applies a Winckelmannian, or rather, Schillerian interpretation to the Piranesi figure. This is odd. The tale gives Piranesi a Grecian flavor, and simultaneously, it moves close to a Romantic view of art. Art should be aesthetic, then functional, but never *only* functional. In other words, the tale is romantically nostalgic for the eighteenth century, when Piranesi's projects were more feasible, and this emphasis on memory brings the tale close to a Biedermeier paradigm. The elderly man who relates the story of his meeting with Piranesi even says to his young relatives that he is going to speak about "[their] sort of person," namely, a Romantic (before his time) (59).

This tale fulfills Nemoianu's major requirement of the Biedermeier, that it looks back nostalgically to the eighteenth century. But does the tale also look back to the neoclassicism of the period, or only to the period in general historical terms, but within a romantic context, wrapping the eighteenth century together with Romanticism, via Piranesi, as some kind of eighteenth-century Romantic? At least thematically, "Opere del Cavaliere Giambattista Piranesi" looks back to neoclassicism because of Piranesi's importance in defining the neoclassical tastes of this period, even though less successfully than Winckelmann. Perhaps it is Piranesi's failure in establishing Augustan taste as dominant that makes him suitable as a Romantic figure in Odoyevsky's tale. This supports my earlier suggestion that Augustan taste may be easier to resurrect within the his-

torical revivalism of the Biedermeier precisely because it never became dominant and normative, but remained, to use Gadamer's terms once again, a stylistic concept. Ironically, this literary-historical style is still portrayed in the dominant and normative terms of Greek neoclassicism that permeate Odoyevsky's tale. The fact that this story has not dropped the normative aspect of classicism fully, as established via Winckelmann, indicates to me at least that it is not a clearly Biedermeier tale, which uses historical revivalism in more flexible terms. On the contrary, this tale, among the frequent Biedermeier tales characteristic of Odoyevsky, stands out. It stands out because of the obviously high Romantic portrayal of Piranesi as an architect-poet, quite reminiscent of the way Hoffmann portrays his Ritter Gluck. So what we have here is basically a high Romantic tale, which, owing to its continuation of the normative, Grecian concept of neoclassicism, frames Piranesi, the champion of Roman-Augustan taste, in distorted, or should I say, ironic terms. This distortion and irony may be mistaken for being symptomatic of just another Biedermeier tale, by Odoyevsky. I remain skeptical of this. True, the Biedermeier looks nostalgically back to neoclassicism, but so does Romanticism, as elaborated earlier. The fact that Piranesi is thematically here does not prove the case either way. More subtle evidence is needed, and I think we have such evidence in the way Piranesi is portrayed, as an architect who is inspired by poetry and thinks poetically, very different from Cypriano in "The Improvvisatore," who thinks mechanically. Piranesi is portrayed as a Romantic figure to whom the tale looks as a model, or perhaps only nostalgically. The tale is therefore a high Romantic one, like Hoffmann's "Ritter Gluck," continuing normative ideals of classicism in unreflexive, unquestioning fashion, or it is a Biedermeier tale which looks back nostalgically not to neoclassicism, but to high Romantic figures such as Piranesi. If the latter case is true, the eighteenth century, specifically the Grecian taste, is largely seen as a part of the high Romantic tradition by Biedermeier writers like Odoyevsky (as I have seen it too), and to argue over the seriousness or irony of this tale is irrelevant. Piranesi is not placed in this tale for his championing of Roman tastes but because his engravings serve as a model, for Odoyevsky, of high Romantic aspirations, of impossible projects. Augustan taste is not even a functioning literary-historical style here, let alone a larger concept. Aspects of Piranesi's figure are exploited, but

through the tale's normative structure where Grecian taste and Romantic milieu, if they are indeed here together, complement each other and fuse into a whole philosophy or worldview.

Wylie Sypher would probably not agree with my suggestion that Piranesi is a Romantic figure. But I am not saying this. I am saying that he is seen as a high Romantic figure *in Odoyevsky's tale*, through the distortions which are made possible by normative concepts and high Romanticism itself (i.e. Grecian taste growing into monolithic neoclassicism, fueling Romanticism, etc.). Sypher says that while "rococo artists like Canaletto, Guardi, and Belloto...[were painting] imaginary views....Piranesi was [by mid-century] engraving his sinister visions of classic architecture, his shadowy prisons, his nocturnal Roman ruins" (*Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature* 49). He argues that such "eighteenth-century capriciousness is usually treated vaguely as an aspect of early romanticism. But in its first phase, at least, it is a bizarre facet of rococo—the *genre pittoresque*, a technical development in rococo design. Its history is brief [from Pineau's work in 1730 France to Cochin's 1754 attack of this caprice as *désordre*], and must not be confused with the larger romantic developments or with the picturesque" (49). Sypher adds that "French engravers and painters transformed [the Baróque cartouche] into illusory structures known as *morceaux de caprice*...[which even include] some of Watteau's arabesques,..." (50). It is certainly possible to apply Sypher's comments to Odoyevsky's tale, reading Piranesi not as a Romantic figure but a Rococo one, whose bizarre architectural designs, necessitating the removal of Mont Blanc, and so on, are the *morceaux de caprice* required of the *genre pittoresque*. Does this interpretation indicate that Odoyevsky's story is looking back nostalgically not to a figure portrayed as Romantic, but to one portrayed as Rococo? The difference is one of milieux, Romantic or Rococo, but the question is one of tastes, Grecian or Augustan, as I mentioned once before. It did seem odd that the tale was framing Piranesi's Augustan taste within a basically Romantic milieu. Sypher's comments would simplify things greatly. Now we have a decidedly Biedermeier tale by Odoyevsky, as was expected all along, because the Biedermeier, owing to historical revivalism, should naturally come back to a more historical-stylistic neoclassicism, such as that championed by Piranesi. Piranesi is no longer detached from his milieu, he is once again a champion of Roman taste, as in life so too in

the tale, and hence, the Biedermeier clearly fulfills one of the requirements mentioned by Nemoianu and Mrazek. The Biedermeier looks back nostalgically to the Rococo, in the case of Odoyevsky's "Opere del Cavaliere Giambattista Piranesi," to the *genre pittoresque* via Piranesi's capricious architectural engravings. I would be willing to allow for this possibility, thanks to Sypher's own eccentricities of interpretation, if it was not for one detail. If the tale is indeed Biedermeier, looking to Piranesi as a master of Rococo engraving, I would also expect it to champion or at least make obvious the capriciousness of such engravings. It does not do this but emphasizes the picturesque, romantic, and poetic qualities of the designs as an aesthetic totality, "a vault connecting Etna with Vesuvius for the Arch of Triumph," among other things.

Floyd Stovall, in *Edgar Poe the Poet*, says of Poe's first "To Helen" poem that the "lyrical economy and balance in the perfected form...are in keeping with...Poe's 'impulse to classicism'" (qtd. in Phillips 81). This "impulse to classicism" is also felt in "The Cask of Amontillado." The language here is less arabesque, more economical and efficient than in Poe's earlier work, notably "Ligeia" and "The Fall of the House of Usher." The tale can of course easily be read in psychological terms, via the revenge motif, as Daniel Hoffman has read it: "The Fool [Fortunato with his cap and bells] is man's lustful nature made absurd and comical....'The Cask of Amontillado' is, whatever else it may be, a screed of psychomachia, in which the calculating intellectual principle [Montresor] cleverly tricks, entraps, immobilizes and extinguishes the body" (Hoffman 225). The tale can also be read more historically. Burton R. Pollin writes that "there can be no doubt that Poe had a French setting in mind, although he is very casual about mixing Italian and French names....Part of the power of 'The Cask of Amontillado' lies in the extraordinary unpleasantness of the crypts through which Montresor leads Fortunato to his doom, and this, I feel certain, comes largely from [Hugo's] *Notre-Dame de Paris*" (35, 30). Mabbott suggests that while the setting of the story is not stated, to him "it seems French, at a time when rapiers were still worn. The name of Poe's narrator, Montresor, is that of an old French family;...Fortunato's name is significant, meaning fated as well as lucky; Luchesi's name is from that of a Baltimore personage..." (*Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe* 3:1255-6). Mabbott's notes cite Luchesi as "a native of Lucca in Italy, but a resident of Baltimore

for thirty-five years. In 1837 and 1840, the Directory [of Maryland] calls him a musician; in 1842, a music teacher; in 1845 and later, a Professor of Music. Playing the piccolo [which he did], however well, is regarded as comic by literary convention,..." (2:471). In "The Cask of Amontillado," Luchesi is described by Fortunato as one who "cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry" (3:1258) and also more generally as "an ignoramus" (3:1261).

Richard P. Benton suggests that the tale is carefully set in pre-revolutionary France:

> ...Montresor accosts Fortunato in a village where the latter has attended a *Mardi Gras* party, judging by his costume—that of a court fool or jester of the Middle Ages....[Montresor] sports a *"rapier"*...no doubt the type called the *colichemarde*,...the wearing of which in the Ancien Régime was a privilege reserved exclusively for titled aristocrats....Montresor dons "a mask of black silk"...The wearing of masks was a custom of French gentlemen during the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries...[but] after the second half of the eighteenth century gentlemen's masks became confined generally to carnival dress or to attendance at masked balls. (Benton 20)

Regarding the character of Montresor, Benton speculates as follows. Two men of importance held the title of "Count of Montrésor....One,...was the notorious Claude de Bourdeille, Count of Montrésor (1606-63); the other was Paul-Hippolyte de Beauvillier, Duke of Saint-Aignan and Count of Montrésor (1684-1776). The latter was a distinguished courtier, statesman, diplomat, and patron of letters who, unlike Bourdeille, was steadfastly loyal to the king" (20). He says that both men, at different times, inhabited "the Château of Montrésor, located in the lower Loire River valley on the outskirts of a village [both built along the Indre River bank, ten miles from Loches in the province of Indre-et-Loire, previously Touraine]. The château was built in the sixteenth century on the substructure of a fortress which had been constructed at the beginning of the eleventh century....Of Italian Renaissance style—a popular mode of architecture [at the time]...with underground passages of the substructure remaining,...[a good model for Montresor's 'palazzo' in Poe's tale]" (20). Benton believes that the first Montrésor is the model for Poe's protagonist, "the seventeenth-century political conspirator in the entourage of King Louis XIII's weak-willed brother, Gaston d'Orlèans....above all because of the reference in Vigny's novel *Cinq-Mars* to Montrésor's disguise as 'a master mason, with a ruler in his hand.'...Poe's Montresor [is] also portrayed as a master mason with a trowel in his hand, a disguise which Fortunato, like Louis XIII in Vigny's novel, fails to penetrate" (26). Going further away from the Montresor character, he sug-

gests that the "subterranean tunneling under Paris" could also play a part in the tale, but Poe's use of the word "catacombs" cannot indicate a time before April of 1786 when the subterranean tunnels were consecrated by the church, and bodies began to be moved there from the already full "La Cimetière des Innocents" (21). Therefore, "the narration most likely takes place on the eve of the Revolution, that is, ca. 1787-88, a hypothesis that would date the murder of Fortunato fifty years previously, ca. 1738-39" (21). Montresor does say that the vaults were "lined with human remains,...in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris" (*Poe* 3:1261).

Kathryn M. Harris touches on certain elements picked up by Benton. She believes that "'The Cask' is set at carnival time, a Catholic season, just before Lent, and the tale itself begins as a confession. The underground passages below the palazzo are literally 'the catacombs of the Montresors'...but the phrase also recalls the history of the early Church. The wine they seek, though its eucharistic significance is not elaborated, appropriately suggests through its non-existence the ironic perversion of Montresor's religious devotion" (Harris 122). She elaborates:

> Although the occasion for murder is as mysterious as ever, it is clear that the hostility between the two characters is worked out in terms of the Catholic-masonic opposition....Catholicism, like other aspects of medieval life, was for Poe a Gothic device used to intensify effect. Among Roderick Usher's favorite books are "a small octavo edition of the *Directorium Inquisitorum*" and "his chief delight," a "rare and curious book in quarto Gothic...the *Vigiliae Mortuorum Secundum Chorum Ecclesiae Maguntinae*." The Inquisition is the source of horror in "The Pit and the Pendulum," and the Church and immurement are linked in "The Black Cat," whose protagonist conceals his wife's body in a wall "in the cellar—as the monks of the middle ages are recorded to have walled up their victims." [in other words] Montresor's Catholicism—even if it is only nominal and melodramatic—is essential to the unity of the story. (122)

Her final suggestion is that the last line of the tale, "*In pace requiescat!*," rather than being "an expression of 'sanctimonious contentment,' a plea to be freed of guilt, or a sarcasm uttered as Montresor sees that Fortunato died without recognizing that his murder was an act of vengeance....is an appropriate ironic comment on the death of a mason, a sanctification of Montresor's private auto-da-fé" (123).

Harris' point about how the church and immurement are linked in "The Black Cat" (and I would suggest in "The Cask of Amontillado"), together with other Gothic devices, is well received, as is Benton's suggestion that the tunnels underneath Paris or the caverns beneath the Château of Montrésor are the inspiration behind Poe's own vaults. However, if we also accept

Benton's interpretation of this tale as taking place in the 1730s, and the narration in the 1780s, it is equally plausible that the plot is enacted in Rome, considering the fact that Montresor refers to his home as a "palazzo" (*Poe* 3:1258), and also considering the fact that he speaks of how the Italians "practise imposture upon the British and Austrian *millionaires*" (3:1257). Montresor encounters Fortunato "about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season,..." (3:1257). Visitors going on the Grand Tour would, while in Rome, be interested in the carnival which began eleven days before Ash Wednesday, when men and women in disguises paraded up and down the streets, throwing candy and confetti (Hibbert 138). More gruesome travellers, rather than enjoying the carnival, would go to the Capuchin convent where they would enter the catacombs, in which there were grottoes made entirely of knuckles, knee caps, ribs, and skulls; the monks who conducted the visitors through the caverns would cheerfully point out the skeletons of former friends and the empty niches where there own bones would be displayed (139). Montresor mentions how he passed "through walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs....[and] passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame" (*Poe* 3:1260-1). Poe's tale can easily be read as participating in the decay and gloom of Rome which inspired Edward Gibbon in 1764 to write his famous work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Hibbert 142).

But how does Poe's "Amontillado" fare when read alongside Odoyevsky's "Piranesi"? Does it tend toward a Roman-Rococo milieu in less superficial terms than Odoyevsky's tale, which basically poses Piranesi as a Romantic figure and remains a Romantic tale? Does Poe's tale (from a writer who is usually not as cleanly post-Romantic as Odoyevsky) move closer to fulfilling the one crucial aspect of a Biedermeierzeit that fully participates in historical revivalism, namely, dropping the normative aspect of the term classicism, Winckelmann- and Schiller-inspired, and reintroducing the ill-defined second wave of neoclassicism? Montresor is not, after all, a very Schillerian character, much less than Odoyevsky's Piranesi, being closer to Richard III and company: "Richard III, Iago are not tragic figures for Schiller, because they behave like animals, they behave under

the impulse of passion; therefore, he [Schiller] says, since we are not thinking about human beings, since we are not thinking in moral terms, we watch with fascination the marvellously ingenious behaviour of these intriguing human animals, who do behave in the most remarkable fashion..." (Berlin 80). Montresor begins the tale on such a note, saying that he "must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong" (*Poe* 3:1256). Montresor is one-sided, which may be good for Poe, but for Schiller "this tragic fact [of one-sidedness] has to undergo a radical transformation. For the one-sided individual is too narrowly real, too limited and determinate to be poetically true. To fulfil his aesthetic function, the tragic individual must be...restored to his generic human heritage" (Graham 142). Montresor is certainly not "restored to his generic human heritage," while Fortunato never leaves it to begin with. In other words, if we assume that for Schiller the human heritage is linked with the idea of a normative, Grecian classicism, or a Romantic perfection of such an idea as in Friedrich Schlegel's terms, then it is impossible to say that Poe's Montresor continues, or is even restored to such a normative level. On the contrary, Montresor, by immuring Fortunato, is also immuring what Graham describes as Schiller's call for a generic human heritage.

Montresor, rather perversely, becomes Berlin's "human animal" who considers himself "marvellously ingenious" for rebelling against generic humanity. In this way, Montresor, if he considers his endeavors to be the mark of genius, comes closer to "the adherents of the *Sturm und Drang* [who] exalted creative genius by ranking its perceptive powers far above those of common man,...[unlike Schiller who] asserted that since the artistic process is not essentially different from the process of the common man engaged in perceiving, a great poet [or any other person] is an original but not a superhuman genius" (Stahl 52). Poe's tale is precisely about delusions of genius, one-sidedness, narrow realities, and a skeptical interpretation of not necessarily aesthetic function, but certainly of poetic truth. The young travellers in Odoyevsky's "Piranesi," who listen attentively to the old man's story, are much more Schillerian than Montresor, saying: "We have no business following the example of those men who worry about making themselves and their friends

famous during their lifetimes, firmly convinced that no one will do it after their death" (*Russian Nights* 59). Isaiah Berlin elaborates further on Schiller: "...he [Schiller] makes a vast contrast between nature, which is this elemental, capricious, perhaps causal, perhaps chance-directed entity, and man, who has morality, who distinguishes between desire and will, duty and interest, the right and the wrong, and acts accordingly, if need be against nature" (Berlin 81). No such thing exists for Montresor. Montresor does not act against nature, he flows through it or lets it flow through him, taking paths of least resistance, and being witty along the way. He is a natural wit, and dangerous too. Schiller would of course disagree, as he does in *Naive and Sentimental Poetry* (1795-6), saying that wit is not natural, that "works of wit are quite misnamed poetic; although, for long, misled by the reputation of French literature, we have mistaken them as such" (*Friedrich von Schiller: Naive and Sentimental Poetry and On the Sublime* 111). Would Schiller consider Montresor to be naive? He says that "to be naive it is necessary that nature be victorious over art,..." (89). He further classifies that the "naive of surprise" can be applied to a person who "is no longer pure and innocent nature" (91). Is this Montresor? He is not exactly pure and innocent, but he still seems all too natural. Perhaps Montresor is closer to Schiller's idea of the "naive *temperament* [das Naive der Gesinnung]" which "will marvel at people and at their astonishment" (91). Yes, this seems to be Montresor, but Schiller adds that "the naive mode of thought can...never be a characteristic of depraved men,...it can be attributed only to children and to those of a childlike temperament" (93). According to this, Montresor is not naive, rather, he is closer to Schiller's use of the term sentimental, as Julius A. Elias describes it: "To the naive poet, the sentimental is cold and unfeeling,...calculating and overintellectual....To the sentimental poet the naive is irrational and anti-intellectual, irresponsible because indifferent to moral discrimination,...To himself the sentimental poet is the imitator of a nature which he conceives of as the embodiment of a rational order of which the formal perfection of his work is the symbol" (*Friedrich von Schiller* 13). But such divisions between terms like naive and sentimental, when applied to Poe's tale, do not work. The "naive poet *is* nature (i.e., 'pure' nature),...[while] The sentimental poet *seeks* nature (i.e., that ideal unity)..." (25). Montresor does not seek nature, it already guides him, and this seems naive, and

he is also morally irresponsible, which is what the sentimental poets accuse the naive of being, but he is also cold, calculating, self-conscious, intellectual, which is what the naive poets accuse the sentimental of being, according to Schiller. Do we therefore have a naive person, Montresor, embedded in a text by a sentimental poet, Poe, a sentimental frame surrounding the idea of the naive? Or is Montresor a new sentimental figure, without the expected moral responsibility, immoral and sentimental at the same time, intellectual, beastly, rational, and irrational simultaneously? There are so many things here, so many paradoxes running into one another in Poe's new medium. "The Cask of Amontillado" is a Biedermeier endeavor precisely because Schiller's theory cannot be applied to it.

Confessing how he walled up Fortunato (possibly in the 1730s, according to Benton), Montresor, rather than inviting a Schillerian classification, appears to be recounting one of those *morceaux de caprice* which Sypher says coincide with, and are quite necessary in the *genre pittoresque*, that "minor and transient mode of a transient style [the Rococo]" (*Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature* 59). Montresor, enjoying the distortion and clash of images necessary for the *pittoresque* to emerge, speaks as follows after immuring Fortunato: "I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells....I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones" (*Poe* 3:1263). An interweaving of Gothic finality, of stones and plaster and bones and falling torches, with the ambiguity of jingling bells, comical or not, creates a new, surreal dimension, evocative of Sypher's comment that *pittoresque* "extravagance is a visionary distortion or confusion of classical, gothic, and oriental forms" (*Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature* 56). Here, such a vision is enacted in the caverns beneath Montresor's palazzo, as when Montresor "reached him [Fortunato] a flagon of De Grâve. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I [Montresor] did not understand....[all this among the bones which] lay promiscuously upon the earth,..." (*Poe* 3:1260-1). Schiller's concepts of the naive and sentimental do not explain well what is occurring here in the caverns beneath Montresor's palazzo. There is much irony, much jest, and even more ambiguity in

the decor and ritual of the place. *Morceau de caprice* is a much better description of what is happening here, Montresor's Rococo frivolities having gone seriously astray. The catacombs have become a bizarre, inverted version of Alexander Pope's Rococo grotto, perversely echoing the lines of "On his Grotto at Twickenham": "Unpolish'd Gemms no ray on Pride bestow, / And latent Metals innocently glow: / Approach. Great NATURE studiously behold! / And eye the Mine without a wish for Gold" (*Pope: Selected Poems* 189). The "soft sounds of falling waters" heard in Pope's grotto, as Park says, are replaced in Montresor's world with bones, wine, and nitre: "'The nitre!' I [Montresor] said; 'see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late'" (*Poe* 3:1260). And later we read: "'Pass your hand,' I [Montresor] said, 'over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed it is *very* damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return'" (3:1261). Montresor is not really worried by the nitre, after all, he is safely recounting events that occurred fifty years previously. Even half-a-century earlier, his politeness was feigned, his acts were measured, and phrases from Pope's *An Essay on Man* (1732) are as informative of Montresor's rivalry with Fortunato as is Gadamer's suggestion that the limits of experience result in rehabilitations of allegory (63), certainly more informative than Schiller's naive/sentimental dichotomy, intended more for poets than critics, as Friedrich says when comparing Boileau's *Le Lutrin* to Pope's *An Essay on Criticism* (174). Montresor ironically fulfills several of the statements in *An Essay on Man*: "The bliss of Man... / Is not to act or think beyond mankind;..." (*Pope* 113). He especially seems to have taken to heart the following famous utterance: "All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee; / All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see; / All Discord, Harmony, not understood; / All partial Evil, universal Good: / And, spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite, / One truth is clear, 'Whatever is, is RIGHT'" (116). And such statements also bring out Fortunato's unassuming nature. Fortunato, like Montresor, does not change in the tale. Looking silly, he begins at a carnival, then pointlessly follows the scent of "Amontillado," and is finally immured among the bones and bottles. He is of course more sluggish than Montresor, suffering from a cough, and is more drunk: "The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled" (*Poe* 3:1260). Montresor is busy plotting while

Fortunato leans heavily upon his arm (3:1260). However terrible Montresor is, or Fortunato ignorant, one thing is made clear by "The Cask of Amontillado" and the interaction between the two characters, echoing these lines from *An Essay on Man*: "Whate'er the Passion, knowledge, fame, or pelf, / Not one will change his neighbour with himself. / The learn'd is happy nature to explore, / The fool is happy that he knows no more;..." (*Pope* 124).

Poe's Montresor certainly seems closer to Rococo features, as part of a larger, ill-defined wave of neoclassicism, than Odoyevsky's Piranesi, who is represented as a more Romantic figure, a part of a greater, normative tradition of neoclassicism commencing with Winckelmann in the 1760s. Questions of narrative frame, according to Benton, that Poe's "Amontillado" is narrated in the 1780s by Montresor, are too insubstantial to throw off such an argument. True, the Grecian taste was dominant by the 1780s, but Montresor's recounting of what occurred fifty years before resembles Mrazek's statement that the Biedermeier is a "Second Rococo." If Poe consciously places the narrative voice in the 1780s, implying a link between Grecian taste and Romantic milieu, he also creates a very interesting dramatic illusion, whereby it appears, within the tale, that the plot falls into the space prior to the birth of normative, unhistorical notions of neoclassicism, and the narrative frame falls into the space after the birth of such notions. This in turn suggests that a split between form and content is what really gives this tale its particular flavor, its Biedermeier qualities, where the narrative frame feigns an unhistorical nature, and the plot resurrects a literary-historical style or epoch, giving the frame an unexpected coloring. Through a unique maneuver, Poe may be maintaining the unhistorical notions passed down via Winckelmann but he switches historical styles, drowning Grecian taste in a flurry of Rococo distortions that are characteristic of the *genre pittoresque* but are voiced in a rational, cool, detached, and Palladian manner by Montresor, who thereby posits the entire incident as normative, suiting his purposes as Grecian neoclassicism has suited the purposes of others.

Interestingly, in "The Cask of Amontillado," the narrative frame is most responsible for reintroducing Augustan-Rococo neoclassicism as a literary and historical style in which the young Montresor functions. The narrative voice is in the first person, reminiscent of the Rococo epistolary

form, but here fragmented by Poe into a confession to heighten its existential effect, and the Lockean foundation behind such effects:

> The rococo of the early 18th century is both preceded and followed by modes of the Classical aesthetic…In the realm of philosophy, the same evolution may be seen, with Cartesian deduction being dominant in the late seventeenth century (contemporary with French Classicism) and a return to system-building evident in the late 18th century (contemporary with the return to the neo-Classicism of David) in the thought of Rousseau and Kant. The interval is filled by the rococo in aesthetics, and in philosophy by the empiricism and sensualism stemming from Locke. (Brady 44)

The narrative voice also comes remarkably close to the idea of an eighteenth-century persona, as discussed by Weinbrot, constructed in an epoch in which the "awareness of masking as a satiric technique was enhanced through the engravings that often guided contemporary readers of formal verse satire….the engraving on the title page of John Brown's *Essay on Satire* (1745), dedicated to Pope, shows the triumphant Muse of Satire flying through the clouds with thunderbolts in her right hand and a somber mask in her left" (Weinbrot, "Masked Men and Satire and Pope" 271). Later, in 1751, "the engraving designed to face Pope's *Epilogue to the Satires* (1738) in Warburton's edition…[shows the muse] giving Pope his pen with her right hand, while holding the mask of a concerned man in her left" (271). Weinbrot mentions that one variation on the satirist's "mask is the young man playing the elder and lecturing his own contemporaries. Persius puts on either the mask of the stoic teacher or the student" (274). Poe's Montresor can be read as lecturing to contemporaries about what he did in the 1730s but *in the 1730s*, hiding his immediate links with the nasty plot through the narrative mask of an *elder Montresor in the 1780s*. This type of reading certainly brings up Mabbott's comment that the tale "is unsurpassed for subtly ironic touches" (*Poe* 3:1252). Luis Murillo's comments imply that such an ironic reading betrays the tale's apparently Roman-inspired neoclassicism, particularly when he says that "for the eighteenth century, irony was an incitement to controversy, to censure, to attack," but he does nonetheless admit that the one irony spoken of at the time was "grave irony," which is impersonal in manner, and which was first mentioned around 1750 with regard to Cervantes (47). "The Cask of Amontillado" can easily be read within the context of this select, grave kind of irony that was allowable in the pre-1760s period. The tale reads like a Biedermeier interpretation of Persian satire, the only kind of satire which,

according to Weinbrot, is characterized by a "transparent irony" that is lost as the decade of the 1730s advances and satire becomes once more Juvenalian, as it had been previous to this brief period, when harsh Renaissance satire, since about 1680, was clothing itself in the elegant and subtle dress of Horatian satire, and consequently, approximating the Juvenalian kind (*Alexander Pope and the Traditions of Formal Verse Satire* 105-31).

Weinbrot also mentions how a "satirist might cast himself as reasonably close to his public personality, and thereby use the echo of his real voice to amplify his speaker's voice....This is...true for the angry moralist Juvenal, who punishes rather than wittily instructs" ("Masked Men and Satire and Pope" 273). This also seems true if we read Montresor as Poe's satirical mask, here employed in a Biedermeier milieu that is perhaps as "satirically hyperactive [as the] late 1720s and 1730s, when Thomas Gilbert's *The World Unmask'd* (1738) stabs, tortures, and lashes its way through hordes of scoundrels" (279-80). We can even read the tale in the light of Weinbrot's suggestion that the 1730s became less Persian and more Juvenalian as they wore on, a transition that is encapsulated in Montresor's plan, which begins with irony and ends with punishment. Mabbott suggests that "'The Cask,' on its surface completely amoral, is perhaps the most moral of his [Poe's] Tales" (*Poe* 3:1252):

> In 1846...a bitter quarrel developed between Poe and the cohorts of the vengeful Mrs. Ellet led by Thomas Dunn English and Hiram Fuller. Fuller attacked Poe in a libelous article in the *New-York Mirror* for May 26; English, reacting to Poe's contemptuous "Literati" sketch in *Godey's* for July (on sale in mid-June), struck back venomously in the *Mirror* for June 23, and the hostilities continued for months. Poe longed for revenge, and indeed his extremely immoderate "Reply to English" (in the *Spirit of the Times* for July 10) buried that worthy under an avalanche of words. That "The Cask of Amontillado," published in the first issue of *Godey's* after the last installment of the "Literati" papers, was the working out of his immediate emotions can hardly be doubted. (3:1252)

Reading "The Cask of Amontillado" in such a context indicates that not only was Poe employing elements of Augustan satire from Alexander Pope's period, but that the second wave of neoclassicism is introduced as both a literary-historical style and a functional device in the tale, in such a way that the story can be read as a compression of Biedermeier literature, society, and politics, a snapshot rather than an encyclopedia of the era in the manner of Odoyevsky's *Russian Nights*, and thus a place where masks must be put on faces, for good reason. Mabbott implies that "the venge-

ful Mrs. Ellet" is probably "the Lady Fortunato" (3:1253).

There is no question that Poe's relationship with neoclassicist features is mediated through the historical revivalism of the Biedermeier, and it is through this revival that the second wave of neoclassicism, the Augustan kind, described as both Palladian and Rococo by Park, works its way into "The Cask of Amontillado." Odoyevsky's oeuvre is also influenced by this historicism of the Biedermeier, but in the case of "Opere del Cavaliere Giambattista Piranesi," a tale tending toward a cleaner Romantic paradigm, the Augustan version of neoclassicism, in turn, seems to leave a more questionable imprint. As mentioned, Gadamer suggests that in Winckelmann's time the concept of neoclassicism became normative, detaching itself from the specifics of Winckelmann's own Grecian taste. A detachment did take place, classifying neoclassicism as normative, but also with an *implied* preference for the Grecian taste. True, there are times when the normative and stylistic aspects of neoclassicism come together, in certain periods, namely, antiquity, as Gadamer also says, but owing to that same possibility such a coupling of stylistic and normative aspects very likely repeats itself, particularly in the epoch which, John Buxton suggests, was known by Goethe as the "century of Winckelmann" (1). It is in this period that Winckelmann calls for the "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" of Grecian classicism, a call which is echoed later when Friedrich Schlegel calls for a "limitless growth of classicism." The Grecian taste and high Romantic milieu therefore engage in endeavors reminiscent of the medieval mindset, which thinks of antiquity as being enacted and completed in the present. Perhaps this is why the emphasis on memory is neglected in this normative phase of neoclassicism and everything becomes a struggle in the big present, as Lockridge suggests when contrasting Shelley with Wordsworth, the latter being a more Biedermeier figure (283-4). The contrast is even more striking when Poe and Odoyevsky are brought into the equation. The historical revivalism of the Biedermeier, which breaks down the Schillerian idea of a normative, contemporary classicism, is here felt as both memory and memory lapse, as in "Ligeia" and "The Cosmorama," where the narrators make of remembrance and forgetfulness a pathological exercise, respectively. It is especially felt in "The Cask of Amontillado," where the idea of revival is so delicately introduced, through a satirical

masking borrowed from neoclassicisms more stylistic than normative, that boundaries between memory narrative and contemporary incident eventually dissolve, pointing not to a perpetual classicism but to a stylization that, perhaps through Odoyevsky, perhaps through Poe, ended more than half-a-century of normative experience (the age of Grecian neoclassicism and the high Romantic paradigm).

Conclusion

The overall conclusion of this study is that the Poe and Odoyevsky oeuvres are in a complex relationship with the idea of a Biedermeierzeit (1815-1848). Their work reflects more clearly the main characteristics of the Biedermeier than that of E. T. A. Hoffmann. There is more ambiguity in Poe's and Odoyevsky's work, certainly in terms of paradigm (it is definitely not a high Romantic one) but also in terms of theme (excellent examples being "Ligeia" and "The Cosmorama," two tales that cannot be described as fantastic in Todorov's sense of the term, but that nonetheless do variations on this idea). Primarily, I find that destabilization plays an integral part in the Poe and Odoyevsky canons. And more broadly, that destabilization is reflected in the larger, Biedermeier milieu in which their writing is situated. It is a milieu in many ways prototypical of the contemporary, theoretical scholarship on Poe, as exemplified by the Lacan-Derrida debate on "The Purloined Letter." Worded differently, I would say that the Lacan-Derrida debate is an exemplary moment in postmodern Poe scholarship that answers the literary and historical concerns *only implied* in the Poe and Odoyevsky oeuvres, which are in their own way exemplary moments in the Biedermeier.

In the first chapter of the study, it was argued that in Lacan's case, previous texts such as Aristotle's *Poetics* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* serve as the foundation for the psychoanalytic reading of Poe's "The Purloined Letter," and this Grecian classical foundation is the key to reading Poe's ratiocinative tales. In the second chapter, Derrida's response was looked at, and even though the historical layering implicit in Lacan's article is here made obvious, certain broader questions relevant to the Poe oeuvre and more generally, the Biedermeier, still remain unanswered. Nonetheless, Derrida's reading of "supplementarity" and "drift" into Poe's ratiocinative trilogy in many ways overlaps with some of the characteristics of the Biedermeier itself. The third chapter gave an overview of period style analysis as practiced by certain critics (Patrick Brady, William Park, etc.), and blended it with the historically conscious, hermeneutic paradigm proposed by Hans-Georg Gadamer, the idea of a "horizon of meaning," redefining period style analysis as

something that operates both synchronically (comparing texts from the same period) and diachronically (comparing texts from different eras), but also redefining period style analysis in more intricate, fragile, and open-ended terms than expected of such a mode of analysis (as traditionally practiced by Helmut Hatzfeld, Roger Laufer, etc.). Such a revisionist approach to period style analysis partially reconciles it with Lacan's and Derrida's contributions to Poe scholarship, acknowledging their oftentimes honest reluctance to give clear-cut conclusions in their articles, but also suggesting, much like Perkins in *Is Literary History Possible?*, that literary periodization and classification are still helpful for the interpretation of literature, particularly Poe's and Odoyevsky's work which, much like Lacan's and Derrida's responses to Poe, does not offer any obvious conclusions or answers. Chapter four gave an overview of what various critics have broadly said about Romanticism (Beiser, Abrams, Frye, Marshall Brown, etc.) and what other critics have more specifically said about the Biedermeier (Sengle, Nemoianu, Malekovic, Zivkovic, etc.).

Chapters five through eight then put the previous discussion to test, assessing Poe's and Odoyevsky's work in terms of its aesthetic and historical origins (E. T. A. Hoffmann's tales) and in terms of the Biedermeier (late and/or post-Romantic) paradigm in which such work actually appeared and first circulated. Tales by Poe and Odoyevsky were read in relation to four loose themes, the Doppelgänger, the artist, the detective, and the fantastic, respectively, and it was argued that such themes are illustrated in a more Biedermeier fashion by Poe and Odoyevsky than by Hoffmann, who, nonetheless, to an extent, influenced the direction of their work. The intention of that analysis was not to link these four themes which are common to Romanticism, but simply to implement them in an attempt to distinguish between the Poe-Odoyevsky and Hoffmann oeuvres. The ninth and final chapter further assessed the Biedermeier qualities of the Poe and Odoyevsky canons, this time expanding the period style analysis on a more obviously diachronic plane, reading selected tales in terms of the classicizing and historicizing features evident in the Biedermeier and in terms of the "long" eighteenth century in which Roman and Grecian styles of neoclassicism competed, corresponding with Alexander Pope's and Schiller's oeuvres, respectively. It was argued that while the Grecian taste would be dominant by the 1760s, the historical

revivalism of the Biedermeier would eventually destabilize this idea of a unified, normative neoclassicism. Through Poe and Odoyevsky, the Biedermeier ushered in a "modern" paradigm (characterized by destabilization, ambiguity, fragmentation, miniaturization, etc.) that flows uninterrupted into our own time and includes the Lacan-Derrida contribution to Poe scholarship. It also reintroduced elements of Roman-Rococo neoclassicism, a stylistic and rather historical kind of neoclassicism that easily fits in with Biedermeier revivalism, and that in many ways can still be found alongside today's postmodern relativism, as pseudo-historical backdrop, but which was originally the dominant paradigm of the first half of the eighteenth century.

Finally, I want to mention that the classification and periodization applied in my study mostly to Poe's, Odoyevsky's, and Hoffmann's oeuvres, can also be thought of as an interdisciplinary endeavor. In Patrick Brady's study, and to a lesser extent in mine, certain terminology more common to art history (i.e. Rococo and Biedermeier) has been taken and applied to literature, but Perkins believes this to be a natural and inevitable result of the fact that basic premises of literary history and periodization "come to us from the romantic period [which is interdisciplinary and allows for conceptual movement]" (86). Perkins gives a particular example: "A narrative history of the classification of English romantic poetry may also become a romantic project" (87). I would never go so far as to say that my own project has become a romantic one, primarily because its focus was not Romanticism per se but more ambiguous, later variations on and antagonisms to Romanticism (i.e. Poe and Odoyevsky). Ferdinand Brunetière says that literary works which are subtle, or not revolutionary enough, can never count as parts of "literary histories" because these histories are "narratives of change;...the works in which change is hardly visible must fall out of them" (qtd. in Perkins 163). Many differences between the Biedermeier and Romanticism proper are tentatively and lightly visible but never obvious enough in some empirical sense, to be worthy of incorporation in literary histories, according to Brunetière. Hence, my study of Poe and Odoyevsky cannot and does not expect to be called a literary history (in the great tradition of Romantic interdisciplinariness) because of the nuances of the area of specialization, a specialization which has continuously kept me aware of the historical impasses that in part define it, that in

part define recent Poe scholarship as exemplified by the Lacan-Derrida debate, and that in part, more broadly, define the Biedermeier.

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